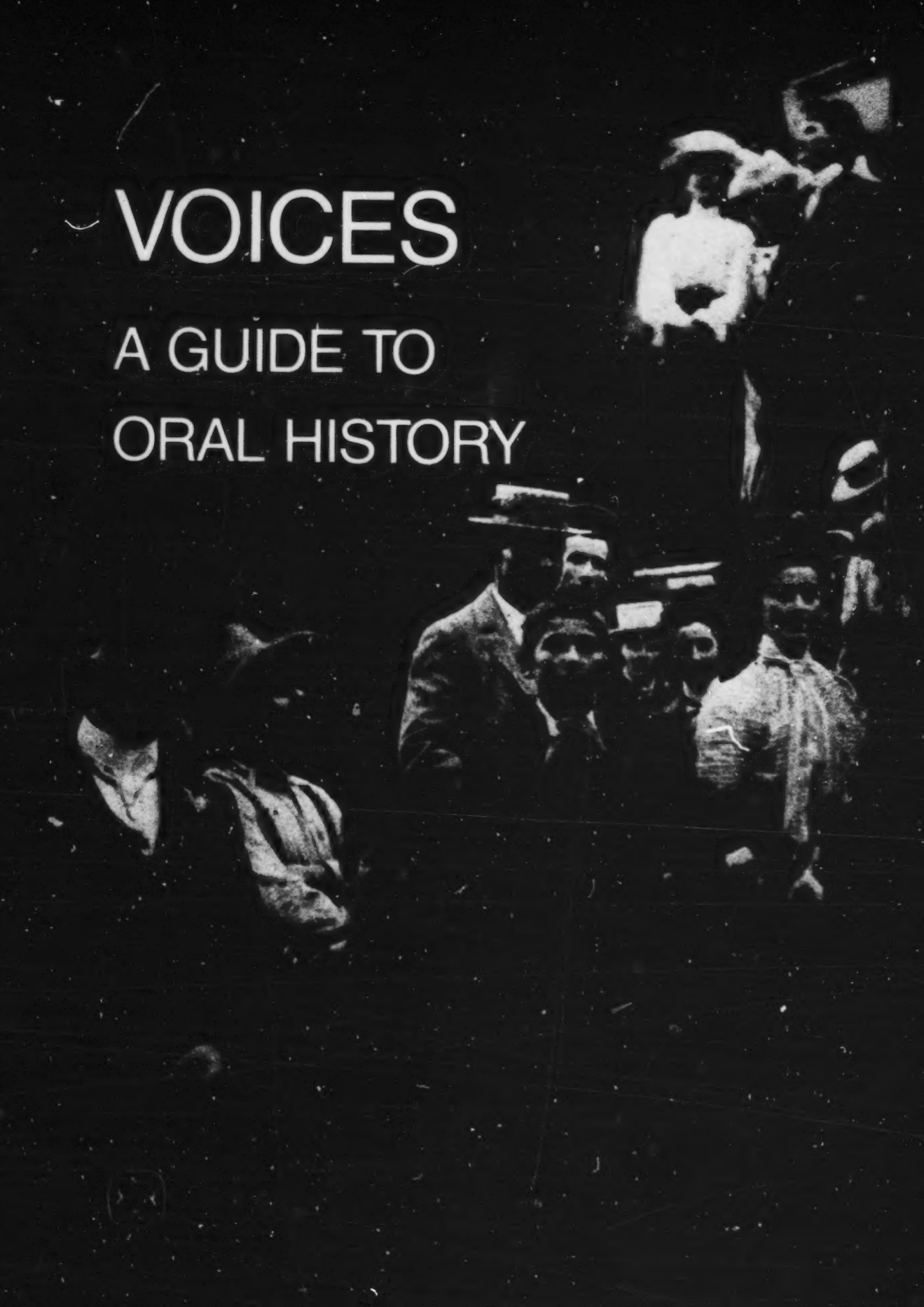
VOICES

A GUIDE TO ORAL HISTORY



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VOICES

A Guide to Oral History

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PREFACE

This book is a practical guide for creating, preserving and using oral history, the term commonly used for the tape recording of first person reminiscences of past events. Since the 1960s there has been a high level of interest in oral history and a continuing demand for theoretical and practical information about oral history. *Voices* updates and expands our previous guide, published in 1976 and long out of print. While this guide contains information relevant to many kinds of sound recordings, its focus is the planning, creation, documentation and use of oral history interviews.

Voices is divided into five chapters. The first, "The Challenge of Oral History," discusses the place of oral history in the larger historical record and deals with the controversy that has surrounded oral history. It also defines the important principles which underlie the practise of oral history Chapters two, three and four deal respectively with three basic elements of oral history research: equipment, the interview, and how to preserve and make the interview available for research. Chapter five discusses the uses of oral history. We have included an annotated bibliography and appendices and checklist which provide information about equipment and methods.

Chapters three, four and five, present a progression from the intangible memories of participants or eyewitnesses of events through to the tangible end product, "history", whether that history be published writing, documentary sound programs, genealogy or some other form. The chapter titles suggest a theoretical framework for this process. "From Memory to Artifact" describes the interview procedure which gives a permanent form to the memories of the interviewee; the intangible memory becomes an artifact. "From Artifact to Document" describes the archival procedures which turn the tape recording, the artifact of the interview, into a permanently preserved, useful and accessible document. "From Document to History" shows how oral history recordings may be used to produce "history" in its various forms as well as giving guidelines for the ethical and efficient use of oral history sources.

Throughout this guide we have suggested options for interviewers with different requirements and levels of skill, experience or financial resources at their disposal. There are minimum standards of content, sound quality and interpretation all oral history interviewers should strive to meet—and there are methods of reaching these standards. In oral history, as in many endeavours, the keys to success are flexibility and resourcefulness. The advice in this book is a set of guidelines rather than a definitive model of a single, perfect approach to oral history.

* * *

The Sound and Moving Image Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia maintains a large collection of sound recordings (on cylinder, phonodisc, wire and tape) as well as films and video tape recordings pertaining to British Columbia. Our oral history collection, which concentrates on the

post-1870 history of British Columbia, is the largest component of our sound archives and comprises a rich and varied resource for researchers.

While we are interested in acquiring tapes and tape collections of province-wide scope we do not believe it is practical or desirable to collect everything that is produced. Collections are often best kept at the place of their origin whether that be a community, an institution or a private business or organization. Rather than attempting to be a general repository for the entire province we prefer to offer assistance so others may create, preserve and use their own material. We also wish to encourage common procedures and standards in the belief that these will benefit all practitioners and users of oral history.

* * *

Few people agree on a standard terminology for the field known as oral history. The problem begins with those two words themselves (oral vs. aural; is a tape recorded interview really "history"?). Should the field really be called "sound documentation"? Is the person being recorded called an informant, a raconteur, a source, a speaker or an interviewee? Is the person pressing buttons a recorder, a researcher, a historian or an interviewer? And is the end product a sound recording, a sound document or simply an interview?

We are aware of the varieties of terminology with their myriad nuances and connotations, semantic and linguistic, sometimes emotional and ideological. In this book, however, we will generally refer to "oral history," the practice of recording (usually audio tape recording) first person, unscripted accounts of personal recollections. The primary speaker in the interview will be the "interviewee" and the person conducting the interview will be the "interviewer." "Sound recording" is a generic term which includes all formats and media, including oral history.

— Derek Reimer
Editor

THE CHALLENGE OF ORAL HISTORY

Oral history is an extremely popular method for the study of the past. Its use of the actual words and voices of those who lived and witnessed history and its ability to document people and subjects previously absent from the historical record, have made it one of the most exciting recent developments in the field of history. Those who are about to undertake oral history research should know and understand its special qualities and advantages in order to realize the full potential of their work. They should also be aware of its limitations and of the criticism that is sometimes directed at oral history.

Oral history is not a new technique for collecting historical information but what is new is the ability to preserve it in tape recorded form. The post-war electronics revolution has given us relatively inexpensive portable tape recorders so that almost anyone interested in recording oral history can do so. It has frequently been pointed out that oral history was one of the earliest methods of recording and writing history and that there was a lapse over the past few centuries because of the growth and dominance of the printed or written word as the main mode of communicating and recording society's transactions. Historical field work, including oral history, fell out of favour and was replaced by the close analysis of printed and written materials and the resulting unfavourable image of oral evidence (as opposed to paper documentation) still prevails in certain academic circles

In the twentieth century, the place of printed and written documents has been undermined by modern communications — telephone, telex, satellites. Modern oral history is tape recorded oral history, superior because one can preserve precisely what people say and how they say it. The only limitation is the imagination of the creators and users of oral history.

Oral history's most important feature is its ability to create source material where none now exists. This has led to the creation of oral history at all levels, from local history to government archives, including a wide range of subjects that were

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Many . . . limit the value of oral history and interviewing to anecdotes, the illustrative incident, the ambience of the time, to clues on where to search further, or a mere feel for the facts . . . . I think it helps get the event itself . . . . Not colour, or peripheral facts, or a feel for the situation, but the guts of the event, the heart of it.

—*Walter Lord*, Oral History Review *(1968)*

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previously inaccessible because of a lack of sources. The reasons for these gaps in the historical record are many but a common theme is that some groups in society had neither the means or occasion to represent themselves by written records and hence our knowledge of them came through impersonal statistics or the observations of a detached and unsympathetic elite. These groups include many blue collar occupations, the rank and file of labour and

the military, ethnic groups, children, women and the pioneer generation. Oral history has enabled historical research to expand beyond the study of elites. As historian Paul Thompson has stated, it has changed the focus of history and opened up new areas of inquiry. It has given back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place.

One important feature of oral history is that its medium is the recorded human voice which conveys meaning beyond the actual words. This additional meaning includes, information about age, mood, accent, ethnic group, regional and class background, sex of the speaker and personality traits. Each voice has qualities which distinguish it from others giving oral history interviews a personal presense that no written record can match.

Furthermore, oral history must be understood within the conventions of spoken, rather than written, communication. Speech is a two-way exchange involving immediate and continuous feedback. Inflection and pace modify the meaning of the words while usage and grammar tend to be less precise because immediate clarification can be sought if meaning is unclear. Prose, in contrast, is a one-way communication and must follow rules and forms more closely to convey unequivocal meaning. An

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Reality is complex and many sided; and it is a primary merit of oral history that to a much greater extent that most sources it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated.

—*Paul Thompson*, The Voice of the Past *(5)*

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appreciation of these distinctions and an awareness of the dimensions of the human voice will allow interviewee and users to realize the full potential of their work.

While oral history has special strengths and characteristics one also hears questions about its validity and usefulness, usually in comparison with written records. One criticism is that oral history is unreliable for "hard facts" and that it must be compared with other records to verify its accuracy. Certainly, information gathered from an interview should be checked against other sources but this verifying process applies not only to oral history but also to every type of record. Undoubtedly there are better sources than oral evidence for many types of information, but for questions that relate to events in the late nineteenth and the twentieth century, interviews and reminiscence are of unquestionable value. The strength of oral history is not so much in gathering factual information as in the expression of attitudes, feelings, impressions, the anecdotes that bring history to life.

Oral history has also been criticized because of the subjective and selective nature of memory and how an interview situation may further distort recollections. These objections are answered, however, by showing that memory has definable characteristics which can be evaluated. The time lapse between an event and its recollection may be taken into account as well as the interviewee's emotional experience and point-of-view. Whether the interviewer adopted a neutral or biased line of questioning is also observable. Few records show the biases of their creators as openly as oral history interviews.

To single out oral history as suspect suggests that written records are free of bias and human motivations. However, all records, whether created by an individual or an institution, serve a certain purpose. This purpose may be a mundane administrative function or to present a self-serving image, but they are not necessarily the "whole truth". Similarly, the decision to preserve a record is based upon a judgement about its value. In both cases, the historical source is not objective or value free. The question of the reliability of oral history, as for any document, should be "Which document is reliable for what information?".

Much of the skepticism about modern oral history is a result of it being relatively new. Historians are not trained to evaluate oral history interviews as they are other documents and many creators of oral history tapes are not fully aware of the need to provide adequate background information about their interviews. Information about the interviewee and a statement of the purpose of an interview are essential if others are to properly evaluate it.

Some confusion about oral history arises when readers do not distinguish between the different types of oral history being published. Books such as those by Barry Broadfoot *(Ten Lost years* and *Six War Years*, for example), simply present oral remi-

Les Walker photographed during an interview session, 1972.

niscences as a kind of mosaic of people's experiences while others, such as David J. Mitchell's biography, *W. A. C.: Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, are fully analysed and interpreted history based on oral history interviews. Some critics have equated one type or the other with all of oral history when, in fact, there are many types to be judged by different criteria. Oral history is practised by many different people including professional historians, family and local historians, journalists, broadcasters, educators, folklorists, sociologists, writers and dramatists. This diversity attests to the strength and flexibility of oral history methodology.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

There are some general principles which should be applied to any oral history project.

Rights of the Interviewee: The cardinal rule is protect the legitimate rights and interests of the interviewee. Prior to any recording, the interviewee should be informed how the interview will be used and where the tape will ultimately be kept. This information allows the interviewee to exercise self-censorship while being recorded and later to place conditions upon the uses of the tapes. The interviewer or institution keeping the tape must ensure that the conditions are scrupulously observed. One area of possible misuse is the misinterpretation results from the differences between transcripts and tapes and users of transcripts should, therefore, be made aware of the possible differences between spoken and written words and advised to consult the tape counterpart.

Cooperative Approach: The interview should be a cooperative venture between the interviewer and the interviewee. While it is the interviewer who initiates the process, the result should be a document that satisfies both parties. To this end, the interviewee should be encouraged to think of the recording as a joint effort and to take an active role in its planning. The ideas of both parties, should be included so that they are both creators of the final product.

Sound Quality: Oral history is first and foremost a document in sound and interviewers should therefore strive for maximum sound quality. Too many interviewers feel that so long as the voice is audible they have succeeded. This is a self-defeating attitude often resulting in an unreliable interview because the meaning of words are obscured by poor quality such as background noises, poor acoustics or inappropriate volume. They are just plain unpleasant to listen to. The most serious consequence of this approach is that it limits the usefulness of the tapes. High quality sound recordings, on the other hand, can be used for radio programs, audio compositions, tape/slide presentations or to add a sound dimension to museum or other displays. High quality sound is neither very difficult to achieve nor very expensive and every interviewer should strive for it.

Archival Preservation: Creators of oral history should appreciate the potential value of their interviews to other users and the importance of having them permanently preserved in a research facility. Whether the creator is a scholar, writer or broadcaster, or simply someone wishing to record an interesting person, the credibility of the work is enchanced if the interviews are available for others to examine. Accordingly, oral history recordings should be considered as documents that will eventually be housed in an archives, library or museum. This brings extra responsibilities upon the creator but the long term results make it well worthwhile. These responsibilities include keeping records of the collecting process, providing systematic information on each interview and protecting the original tape against editing or damage. The best way to meet these and other standards is to consult with an archive or library before commencing a project.

We reach back to the past in a frankly subjective way through reactions, impressions and moods. In so doing we are getting a glimpse of history not made, but being made.

—Imbert Orchard, Sound Heritage *(1974)*

TAPE RECORDERS AND THEIR USE

To produce any high quality tape recording, including an oral history interview, it is important to understand and be at ease with your recording equipment. Interviewers should have the best equipment possible for their purposes and learn to use it well so that attention can be devoted to the interviewee and the content of the interview. Recording circumstances will vary from place to place and even from session to session with the same interviewee. The interviewer must be ready to cope with each situation through the resourceful use of equipment.

This chapter will de-mystify tape recorders, microphones and recording tape by providing a basic description of the process of tape recording, the purposes of the major components in a tape recording system and a brief description of their operation. It will also point out the factors important in selecting appropriate recorders, microphones and tapes and explain how to achieve the best sound quality possible no matter what equipment you might have.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation provided its [Second World War] correspondents with the very latest electronic gear, which was a high fidelity disc recording machine that was portable to the extent that it could be carried around on a jeep.

—Peter Stursberg, COHA Journal, *vol. 2*

A tape recorder is simply a device, partly electronic and partly mechanical, for recording sound (in our case, human voices) and playing it back. In a tape recording system, the microphone converts sound into electronic impulses which activate the tape recorder heads. The heads, in turn, magnetize the oxide coating on the tape which is moved at uniform speed past the heads. The tape retains magnetic patterns which are analogous to the original sound. Playing back the recording simply reverses the process: the magnetic pattern on the tape activates the tape recorder playback head, creating an electric current which is transformed into sound by the loudspeaker. All tape recorders—whether reel-to-reel or cassette, monaural or stereo, expensive or cheap—operate on these basic principles.

CHOOSING A TAPE RECORDER

There is no single ideal make of tape recorder for oral history but rather a range of options that are more or less suitable depending on your budget and objectives. (See Appendix B for a list of recommended audio equipment for oral history).

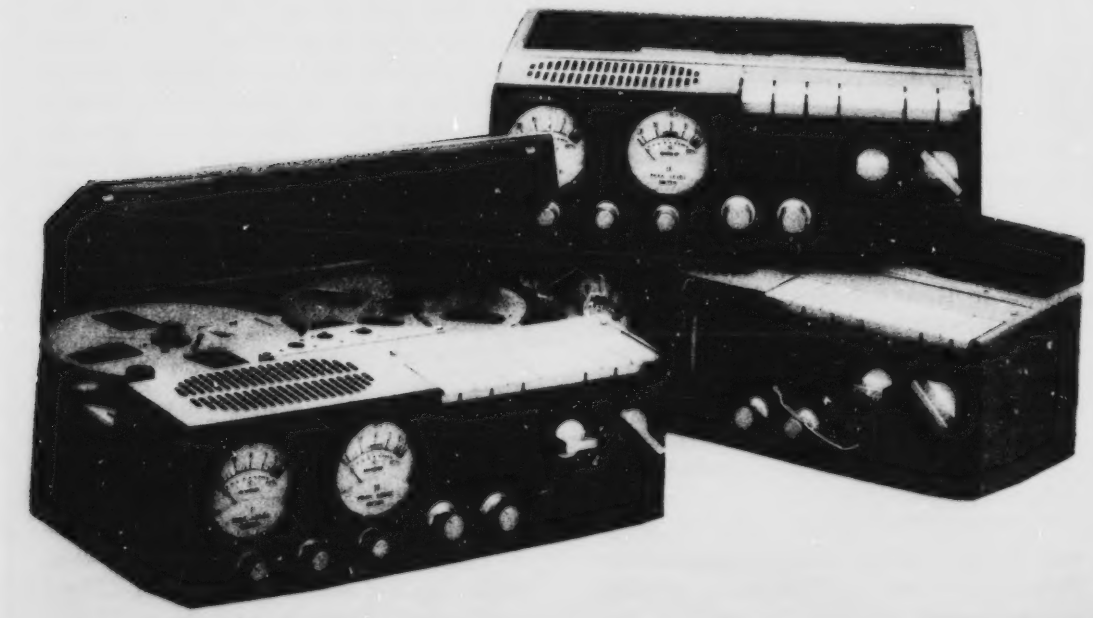
Cassette vs. reel-to-reel: The first decision you must make is whether to use a cassette or reel-to-reel recorder. While different in size, appearance and cost, they are really very similar in operation. A cassette recorder as simply a reel-to reel recorder with reels enclosed in a plastic shell. One signifi-

cant difference between the two types is that commonly used reel-to reel tape comes in 65mm (¼ in.) widths while cassette tape is only half as wide (see figure 1). With reel-to-reel tape, the operator must thread the tape through the recorder; no threading is required with cassettes.

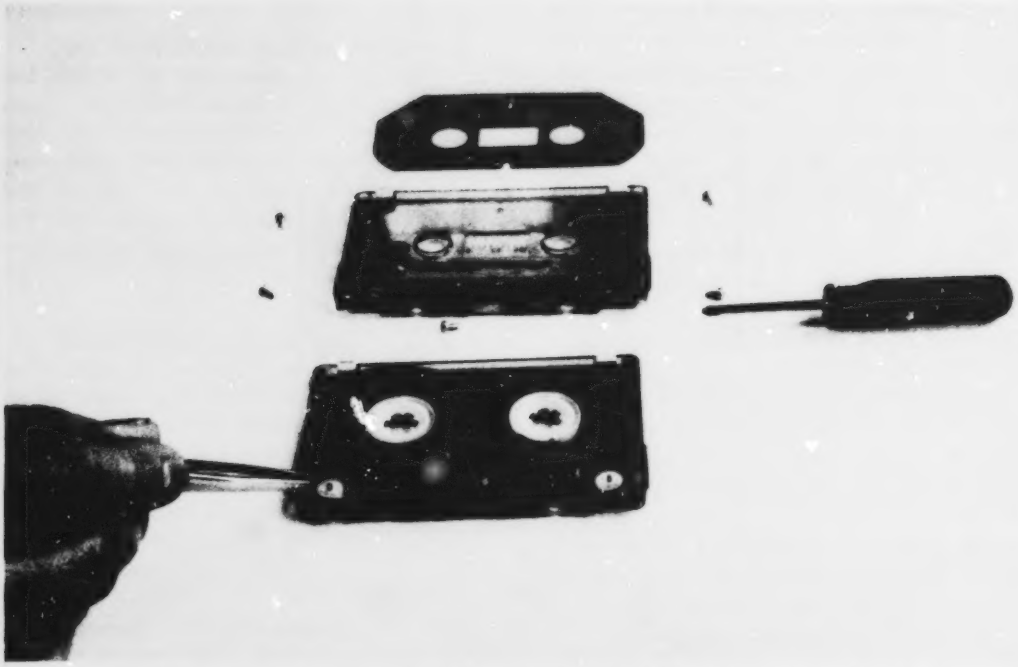
Cassette recorders have a standard speed of 4.75 centimetres per second (cms; or 1⅞ inches per second) while portable reel-to-reel recorders have a selection of standard speeds, the common ones being 4.75 cms, 9.5 cms and 19 cms (1⅞, 3¾ and 7½ ips). As a rule of thumb, you can say that, as tape speed increases, so does the fidelity of the sound recording. It is obvious that the advantage goes to reel-to-reel recorders which allow for selection of the tape speed appropriate for the recording task. With a reel-to-reel recorder, a high quality recording of speech can usually be achieved at 9.5 cms (3¾ ips).

One serious drawback of cassette tape recorders is the fact that the tape they use is not suitable for permanent archival preservation of sound. This has mainly to do with tape thickness, print-through (discussed later) and the long-term stability of cassette tape rather than with the quality of the original recording. Most sound archives re-record cassettes onto reels for permanent preservation as a matter of standard operating procedure. This copying procedure means that the "preservation master" is not the original but rather a first generation copy. Each successive copy produces a loss of quality, although with good equipment this will not be audible in the first generation.

A preferred method of recording is to make the original on reel-to-reel tape so that the original and the preservation master are one and the same. However, since many interviewers will be recording with cassette machines, print-through can be minimized by using 60 minute cassettes rather than 90 or 120 minute ones. The shorter tapes are thicker, the single most critical factor in reducing print-through. Chapter 4 describes procedures for copying and storing oral history interviews.



The 4000 series of Uher tape recorders (photo courtesy Uher).



Using cassettes which are screwed together rather than glued shut makes repairs much easier.

Another disadvantage to cassettes is that they are far more difficult to splice than reel-to reel tape. While cassette splicing kits are available, the tape itself is less accessible and difficult to handle, sometimes requiring dismantling of the cassette, something not possible with inexpensive cassettes where the two halves are glued, rather than screwed, together. Splicing of original recordings is not recommended.

Except for more expensive models, cassette recorders are not equipped with a manual record level control. Manual control allows the interviewer to adjust the record level to the best level for the interviewee's voice, with other sounds diminishing according to distance from the microphone. A steady clear voice recording results with minimum background noise, a crucial factor in oral history field recording.

Most cassette recorders have automatic level control (ALC), which adjusts the record level to the sound available to the microphone. While this ensures that the interviewee's voice will be audible, there is also an annoying tendency to pick up and boost other sounds when the interviewee is not speaking. The result will be fluctuations in recorded levels, especially if the environment has frequent background noises. However, because many interviews occur in a person's home there is some measure of control over background sounds. ALC often produces an adequate recording of a person's voice with minimal interference and some interviewers prefer ALC because of the simplicity of recording: there is no need to monitor level metres or to adjust controls, but they do sacrifice the fine tuning afforded by manual controls. Therefore, we recommend that oral history interviews be made with a manual level control and that when purchasing a cassette recorder one with the manual record level option be selected.

Cassette recorders do have some advantages over reel-to-reel recorders. It is not necessary to thread the tape each time a new track is to be recorded; however, tape threading is not an esoteric skill, but one on the same level as loading a 35mm camera. Cassette recorders are lighter and more compact than reel-to-reel machines.

The two greatest advantages of cassette recorders, however, are their cost and availability. It is

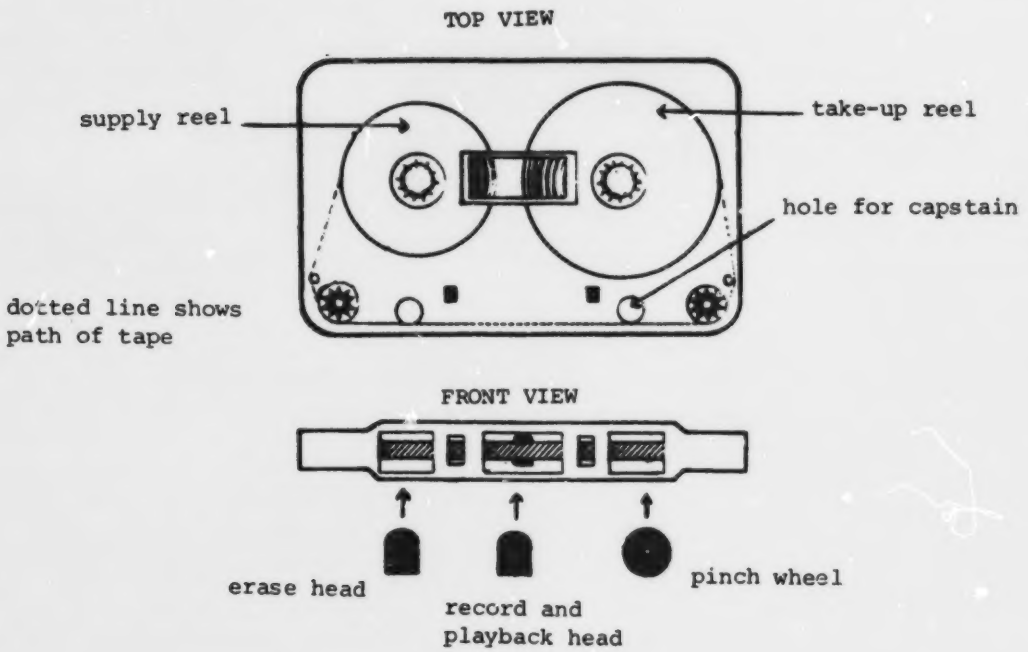


Figure 1: The parts of an audio cassette.

possible to purchase a good quality portable cassette recorder in the price range of $300-$500, while a comparable reel-to-reel machine costs $1200 and up. For this reason, cassette recorders are much more widely available than reel-to-reel recorders. As their quality continues to improve, an even greater proportion of oral history will be recorded on cassettes.

In short, while both reel-to-reel and cassette tape recorders have advantages and disadvantages, anyone making a permanent, high quality recording should make the original recording on a reel-to-reel recorder or have the original cassette re-recorded onto archival quality reel-to-reel tape.

Stereo: Stereo tape recorders make two simultaneous recordings from separate microphones on parallel tracks of tape. Stereo recordings play back sound from two sources giving it an authentic fullness. While not absolutely necessary for oral history interviews, two-track stereo is recommended for many situations. By using separate microphones for interviewee and the interviewer, their voices can be recorded on separate tracks.

This produces several advantages. If desired, the two voices can be separated for transcription, broadcasting or other purposes where the interviewee's voice must be clearly isolated. In transcription, the transcriber may tune out one voice while concentrating on the other. Transcribers often complain that, due to microphone placement, it is difficult to hear the words of the interviewer. With a stereo recording, only one voice is recorded with each mike rather than having to compromise on mike placement to record both the interviewee and the interviewer with a single microphone. Of course the stereo recording can later be re-recorded on a single track if that is necessary or desirable. The common problem of the interviewee and interviewer speaking simultaneously is reduced or eliminated.

Stereo recording is not totally without disadvantages. These include the complexity of having to monitor two voice levels, as well as a slightly higher initial outlay for equipment and higher tape costs. In general, however, advantages far outweigh disadvantages.

FEATURES

Once the decision to use a cassette or reel-to-reel recorder has been made, the next step is to select a particular make and model. Consumer reports and technical magazines publish buying guides that will be helpful in comparing the products available. Tape recorders by major manufacturers are listed and are rated on the basis of performance quality and number of features. There are some features that affect oral history recording.

Manual record level controls allow the operator to adjust the record volume to an optimal level for the sound being recorded. Other sounds will diminish in relation to distance from the microphone. The result is a clear, dominant sound, a desirable quality for oral history and probably up to broadcast standards. The disadvantage is the extra expense; cassette recorders with this feature are more costly than those without.

Automatic level control (ALC) is the only record mode on less expensive recorders. ALC keeps volumes at one level by automatically boosting or lowering the input level. Advantages of ALC are that it frees the interviewer from having to monitor volume controls and prevents recording at high levels which lead to distortion. The disadvantage is a loss in the sound quality. With ALC there is a reduction of the dynamic range which may qualify the meaning in speech and which is crucial to expression in music and to the authenticity of many other sounds. ALC tends to pick up and boost unwanted background noise. Inexpensive cassette recorders feature only ALC and so these disadvantages have to be weighed against the advantages of lower cost and simplicity of operation.

Variable Speed Control is useful in reviewing recorded interviews and in making summaries. It allows the recording to be played back more quickly or more slowly. The Marantz PMD-220, for instance, allows for variations of up to 15% faster or slower than normal speed.

Three-head recorders (as opposed to two-head) allow the operator to monitor the recorder off the recorded tape so that what is actually recorded, rather than what the microphone is picking up, may be checked. Three-head recorders typically have an erase head, a combined record/playback head and a monitor head, in that order (see figure 2).

VU (Volume unit) meters register the amount of signal being recorded. This will indicate if the record volume level is too low or too high. The VU meters should be sufficiently large and finely calibrated for ease of reading. On some recorders, these meters double as battery test meters.

Automatic shut off signals the end of the tape and automatically stops the machine, preventing carrying on an interview without recording.

Recording indicator, usually a light, confirms that the machine is in record, as opposed to playback, mode.

Locking pause control enables the interviewer to pause without having to touch any other control setting, a very handy device for taking short breaks during an interview.

Tape counter is a digital indicator of tape movement which eliminates hit or miss searching for a given passage.

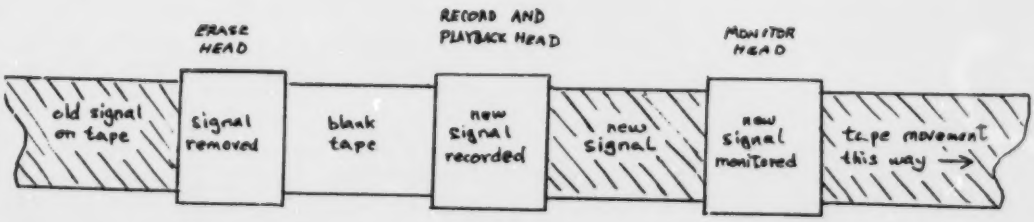


Figure 2: Relationship of tape recorder heads.

MICROPHONES

The various makes and types of microphones present a dazzling array. The manufacturer AKG, for instance, makes more than 25 different microphones. An understanding of a few important characteristics will help you choose the appropriate microphone and thereby produce a better interview. Some recommended microphones are listed in Appendix B.

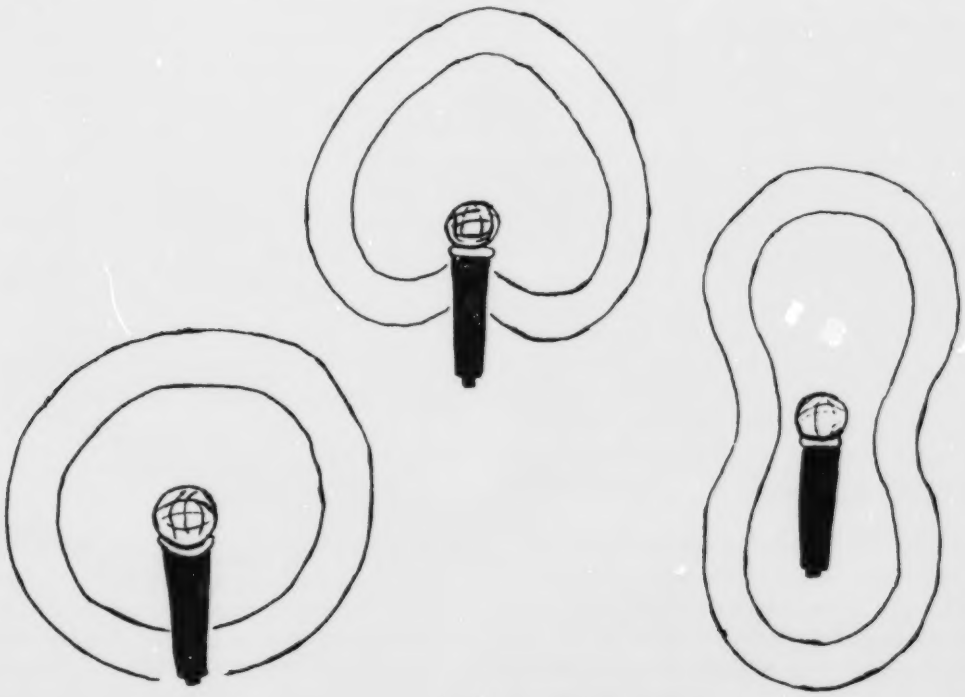
Most cassette recorders are equipped with a built-in microphone which should not be used for oral history. Because these low-quality, omnidirectional microphones are contained within the machine itself, machine noises and vibration are picked up and recorded. There are few absolutes in the field of oral history, but not using a built-in microphones is one of them.

One important consideration in choosing a microphone is the type of pick-up pattern. The most common types are omnidirectional, cardioid and bidirectional (see figure 3).

Omnidirectional pick-up: Omnidirectional mikes record all sounds equally within the 360° radius around it. This type of mike is useful for group discussions with many speakers, or in a situation where all the sounds in a given location—including background and ambient sounds—are to be recorded. For oral history interviews, this type of mike is only appropriate when acoustic conditions are nearly perfect, a situation rarely found in field recording.

Cardioid pick-up: Microphones with a cardioid (or heart-shaped) pick-up pattern emphasize the sounds in front of them while minimizing those from behind. A cardioid mike is probably the best one for most oral history situations. If only one mike is used, however, it is important the interviewer be situated so his voice will be picked up clearly. For instance, an interviewer seated directly behind a cardioid microphone will only be weakly recorded.

Figure 3: Common microphone pick-up patterns. Omnidirectional (left) picks up sound about equally in all directions. Cardioid (centre), or "heart shaped," picks up sounds from in front while tending to reject sound from the rear. Bi-directional (right) picks up from front and rear while rejecting from the sides. The actual patterns are three dimensional and vary from model to model.



Bi-directional pickup: A bi-directional mike will pick up sounds in front of and in rear of the mike while tending to reject those from the sides. If those speaking are positioned properly this mike could be used for a two-person interview situation, as both speakers could be picked up while ambient or background sounds are reduced. Bi-directional microphones tend to be expensive.

Once a decision has been made about the pick-up pattern, the next consideration is the way the microphone will be mounted. The choices include desk-top, stand , clip-on (lavalier) and boom-mounted types. Having one or two mikes with a desk-mount stand is the most common arrangement for a one or two-person interview. Mounting a microphone on a boom, however, is often the best arrangement (see figure 4). The mike can be placed exactly where required and is isolated from vibrations—sometimes a problem with desk-top mikes. The interviewee is less likely to touch or fiddle with a boom mike nor is the scratching of clothing a problem as it sometimes is with types. The disadvantage to this arrangement is that it is bulkier to carry and it takes a little longer to set up for an interview.

Clip-on or lavalier microphones, often used in television, are becoming increasingly popular for oral history interviews. They can be clipped to a shirt or jacket lapel and recent models reduce the noises caused by rubbing against clothing, making them even more effective.

In the case of recorders with only one microphone input, an option to be considered is the use of a microphone mixer. As the name implies, a mixer enables the interviewer to combine a number of microphones into one signal. The mixer is equipped with separate volume controls for each microphone. When properly used, the mixer can provide a clearly audible, evenly recorded signal from several microphones. Some tape recorders have built-in mixers.

The ideal equipment for recording the standard oral history interview (i.e., one interviewee with one interviewer, recorded outside a studio) would be as follows: A two-channel reel stereo recorder with either two directional (cardioid) microphones mounted on booms or two high-quality clip-on mikes. The recording would be made at 9.5 cms (3 3/4 ips) on heavy polyester-based low print —low noise tape, such as Scotch 208 or Ampex 406. With this equipment it is possible to record interviews of consistently high sound quality for any future use. The original recording may be stored permanently without the necessity of re-recording onto archival quality tape.

Lavelier, or clip-on, microphones are increasingly used in oral history interviews. Lavelier microphones eliminate placement problems.

RECORDING TAPE

Audio recording tape is a narrow ribbon of polyester coated with an iron oxide (or other formulation) which is sensitive to magnetization (see figure 4). Its thickness is not much more than that of human hair. There are several factors to consider when choosing a recording tape.

One of the critical factors in selecting recording tape is tape thickness. Most reel-to-reel tapes are between 1.0 to 2.0 mils thick; however, it is possible to buy reel-to-reel tape which is less than 1.0 mils thick and less than 0.5 mils in cassettes. Oral history interviews recorded on reel-to-reel recorders should be on tapes 1.5 mils or more thick. Tapes of this gauge are not only less likely to break or stretch but are also more resistant to print-through.

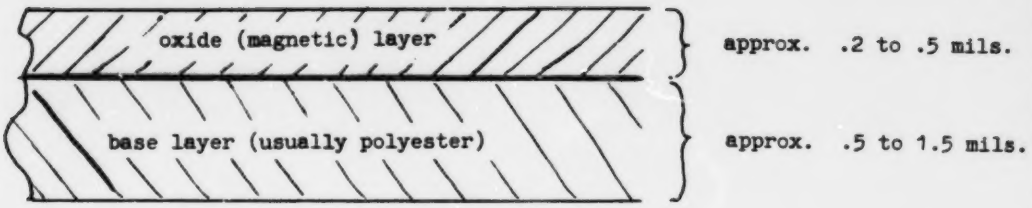


Figure 4: Cross-section of recording tape.

The recommended cassette for oral history interviews is a C-60 (sixty minutes total playing time). C-90 and C-120 cassettes are made with thinner tape so that the extra length can be accommodated within the cassette shell. These thinner tapes are more susceptible to stretching and breaking as well as to print-through. Beware of bargain basement, no brand and so-called "white box" tapes (see Appendix B). They may be perfectly all right but then again they may not. While you may pay a little more for well-known brands of tape, at least the quality will be known and consistent. Expensive "metal" tapes are not necessary for recording oral history, especially since their long-term storage capabilities are not well-known.

Print-through is a phenomenon in which the signal from one layer of tape is transferred to the next layer and recorded there. It grows in strength and permanence with age and reveals itself as an annoying echo of what is recorded on the adjacent layer. Because the strength of the magnetic signal on recording tape diminishes rapidly in a microscropically small distance, extra thickness in a tape can mean a substantial reduction in the amount of print-through.

RECORDING FOR SOUND QUALITY

One aspect of oral history which has not been given sufficient emphasis is that of maximizing the sound quality of the interview. Typically, all efforts have been focussed on recording the best possible information with the underlying assumption that so long as the words are audible to a transcriber then sound quality standards have been met. This is a very short-sighted view which unnecessarily restricts possible future uses of oral history recordings especially since high standards of sound quality are relatively easy to achieve.

Familiarization and equipment checks: The first step to high sound quality is achieving familiarity with your recording equipment and undertaking some practice recording. Set up and take apart your equipment several times so you know each required connection. Even with relatively simple equipment it is a good idea to refresh your memory before going out to an interview. Nothing is more disconcerting to the interviewee and the interviewer than to have an embarrassing fumble as the equipment is being set up.

Before undertaking any interviews, set up all your equipment exactly as it would be for an interview and record while speaking at different volumes from different angles and distances. Do a practice interview with a friend to get the feel of an interview situation. Take a recorder into different types of acoustic environments so you can judge for yourself the effects of recording an interview in a yard, on a street corner, in a room with forced air air conditioning or a noisy refrigerator. A few practice recordings of this type will show that while human beings are able to filter out annoying extraneous

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The use of the human voice, fresh personal, particular, always brings the past into the present with extraordinary immediacy.

—Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past *(15)*

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noises, the tape recorder is not nearly so sophisticated and will faithfully record all these distractions.

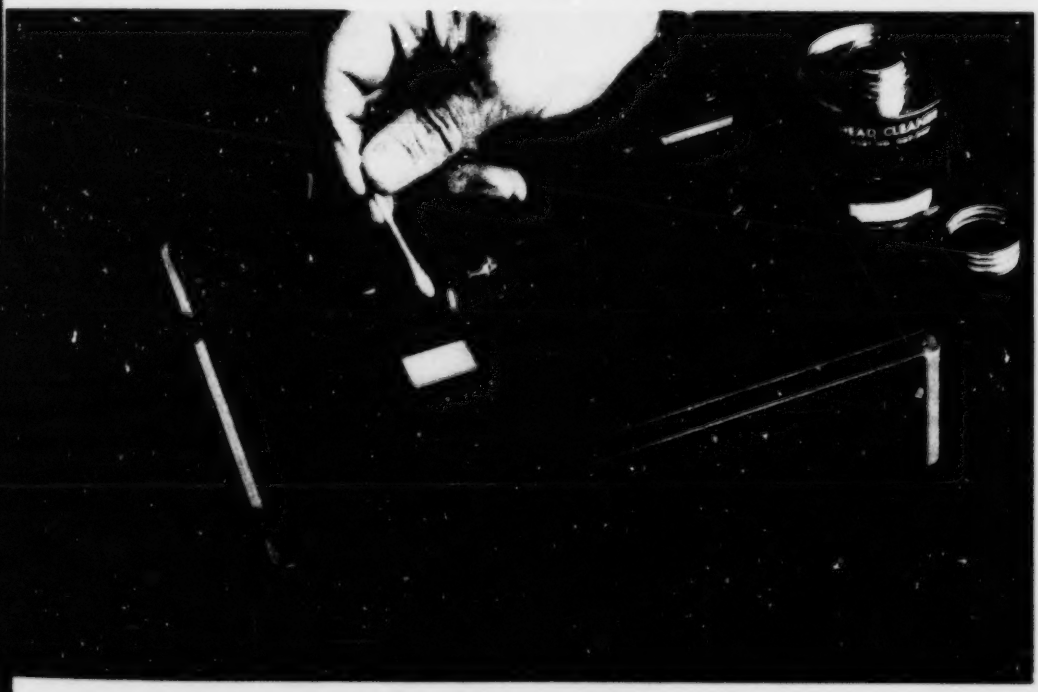
Before each interview the equipment should be thoroughly checked out by quickly connecting and assembling the tape recording system and checking that all power sources and controls are operational. This will ensure that no vital cord or connector is missing and will one day save you from a disappointing lost interview.

Regular maintenance: Tape recorders require a small amount of regular maintenance to ensure that maximum sound quality is attained. One very important but relatively simple maintenance procedure is head cleaning. Because the key to any successful tape recording is the perfect contact between the recording tape and the magnetic heads of the recorder, this is an essential part of tape recorder maintenance. A few particles of dust or one greasy fingerprint can make a crucial difference in the sound quality of your interview. Even a tiny particle interrupts contact between the head and the tape and therefore causes at least partial loss of the recorded material.

Head-cleaning should be done after every 8 to 10 hours of machine use, before any vital recording, or whenever the cleanliness of the head is suspect. If the tape recorder has been sitting unused for a number of weeks or has been transported or stored in a dusty environment, such as an automobile, the record heads should be cleaned prior to its use.

Head-cleaning cassettes are not recommended. The following method, for both cassette and reel-to-reel recorders, is less abrasive and prevents unnecessary wear on the head surface. Disconnect the power and remove the head cover from the machine. Using a clean cotton swab, dipped in head-cleaning solution (available at most audio supply stores) gently swab the head with a slow up and down motion, then a crosswise sweep. This will clean away any surface debris or dirt.

Occasionally, though not as often, clean the transport mechanisms (pinch rollers, capstans, pins, etc.) using a clean cotton swab and denatured alcohol. Do not use the head-cleaning fluid on these parts, especially if they are made of rubber, as it may corrode their surfaces and cause tape slippage.



Regular tape recorder maintenance including head cleaning (shown here) is essential for producing high quality interviews.

It is critically important that the recording head be precisely aligned to the tape as it passes over the head. The measurement and alignment is beyond the scope of most users of tape recorders but should be checked and adjusted periodically by a qualified audio technician.

Acoustic environment: Choosing the correct acoustic environment is a important step in achieving a high quality oral history recording. Making the recording in a properly equipped sound studio may be an option for some interviews but most of us will have to make the best of a recording situation beyond the controlled environment of a studio.

It is usually advisable to choose an indoor, rather than an outdoor site for interviews as it is easier to control the acoustic environment. Only if the interviewer desires the special effect of recording outdoors or if the location is a quiet rural one will the outdoor recording be desirable. Even supposed quiet rural settings may prove to be noisy because of automobiles, agricultural equipment and aircraft.

The tape itself gives an extra dimension to the material collected: the informant comes alive, and the listener is able to a certain extent to form an intuitional estimate of his character and his sincerity, in addition to judging the content of what he is saying.

—George Ewart Evans, Encounter *(1976)*

When recording indoors, try to select a room which does not have forced air air-conditioning. The low level rumbling sound which it emits can be missed by the human ear but will be faithfully reproduced by the tape recorder. Also, beware of that other all-pervasive noise pollution, the 60-cycle hum which is an almost unnoticed part of our acoustic environment. Fluorescent lights are a major offender in this area.

When recording in a home, certain rooms tend to provide far better acoustics than others. The worst acoustic environment (for the purpose of tape recording) is often found in the kitchen where uncarpeted floors, flat painted walls, appliance noise and a high activity level can result in many audible distractions. While it is tempting to think of the kitchen as homey and therefore a good site for an oral history interview, it may be better to think of it as noisy and not so appropriate.

Rooms such as living rooms, dining rooms and studies provide better acoustics for oral history. Carpeted floors, draperies, bookcases and sound absorbing furniture are positive factors. Furthermore, these rooms are often outside the mainstream of pedestrian traffic. Special acoustic problems such as ticking or chiming clocks, telephones or even the family pet should be considered.

Microphone techniques: Another important factor is the positioning of the microphone in relation to the speaker. The interviewee and the interviewer should both be comfortable where normal movements will not interfere with the mike or the tape recorder. The interview is likely to last for an extended period of time and it is not reasonable to expect either party to remain completely still.

The microphone should be placed fairly close to the mouth of the speaker in order to maintain a relatively low record level and thereby reduce unwanted background noises. For most microphones a position 6 to 18 inches away from the speaker's mouth is best. This positioning should be experimented with prior to the actual interview. Different microphones will have different optimum locations.

Microphones on table top stands often present problems with regard to positioning. If the interviewee is seated in a lounge chair or chesterfield there is no place for the mike other than a precarious arm rest or a too-distant coffee table. When using a table top mike it is best to record an interviewee while seated at a desk or dining room table where the mike can be positioned close to the speaker. Because of these restrictions, boom-mounted mikes are highly recommended. They allow the mike to be advantageously placed no matter what the seating arrangement. Clip-on mikes are also useful in this regard. See figure 5 for illustrations of microphone stands and boom mounted microphones.

An interviewee sophisticated in the use of a microphone may be permitted to hand hold the mike, but this is not recommended as any fidgeting with the mike will produce unwanted and distracting noise. This is especially true with less expensive mikes which have less shielding from vibrations. One useful exercise is to make a tape recording of

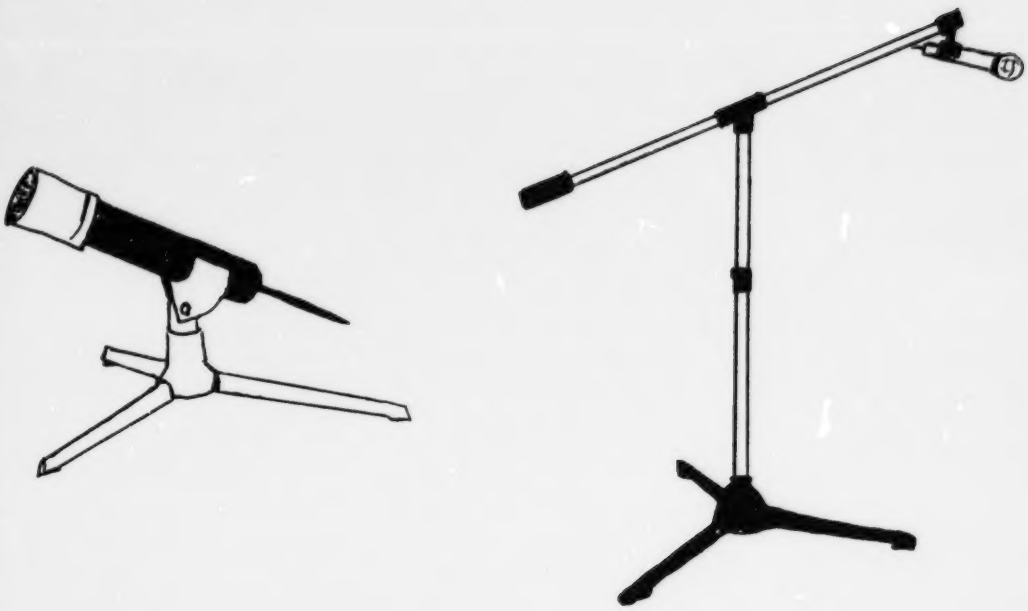


Figure 5: Desk top mike stand (left) and floor stand with boom.

yourself while fidgeting with a mike thereby demonstrating the absolute necessity of preventing this from happening during the interview.

If the desk-top mike is used, it is a good idea to place it on a rubber pad or other cushion to provide additional iolation from vibrations. When positioning the mike you should consider the pick-up pattern, whether it is omnidirectional, bidirectional or cardioid. The tape recorder itself should be some distance away from the mike but still in a position where it can easily be monitored by the interviewer. Never place the mike on top of the recorder case, tempting as this may be, as vibrations and noises will almost inevitably spoil the recordings.

If it is impossible to avoid recording in a room which has poor acoustics, you can reduce problems by the proper use of a directional mike. A directional mike can be oriented towards a speaker and away from air conditioning or other problem. This will result in a significant improvement and for this reason alone directional mikes are usually superior for oral history.

You should also consider the quality, tone and volume of the interviewee's voice when placing your mike. It should be possible for the person to speak in a normal voice without having to take account of the microphone. Place the mike closer to quiet speakers and farther away from "p-poppers" and "s-hissers."

Volume checks and monitoring: After the tape recorder and mikes have been set up, take a few moments to make a record and volume level check. To do this, simply place the recorder in record mode and ask the interviewee to say a few words such as counting from 1 to 10. While the interviewee is speaking, adjust the volume control until it is registering relatively high VU levels. The needle should bounce into the red portion of the scale on natural peaks in the speaking tone, but should not stay in the red region. Play back at normal playback volume and listen carefully to ensure that record levels are appropriately adjusted. Once you have set these levels you should not have to adjust the gain controls again; to do so will cause fluctuations in the final recording levels.

In playing back this short segment you should also listen to the acoustic environment in which the recording is being made. Is there some previously unnoticed background noise or other problem? If so, it should be corrected even at this last moment rather than continue to make an interview with poor sound quality. After this final check, the interview is ready to begin.

Oral history makes a much fairer trial possible: witnesses can now also be called from the under-classes, the unprivileged, and the defeated. It provides a more realistic and fair reconstruction of the past, a challenge to the established account.

—*Paul Thompson,* The Voice of the Past *(15)*

Throughout the recording the interviewer should unobtrusively monitor the tape recorder to be sure that no problems are developing. A glance will show that the reels are rotating normally and the VU meter is still registering. A few words should be played back every half hour or so simply to confirm that all is being recorded normally. Keep track of the remaining tape and make sure that you do not continue recording after the tape has finished. Sometimes the interview is running so smoothly that this point is overlooked with disappointing results.

FROM MEMORY TO ARTIFACT: THE RECORDED INTERVIEW

Oral history interviews are a special kind of sound recording which combine complex human factors with the technical aspects of tape recording. You can, of course, casually record any conversation and occasionally produce an interesting and informative document, but careful preparation and a foreknowledge of the potentials and pitfalls of interviewing can make the production of a worthwhile historical document more likely. This chapter describes how to prepare for and undertake oral history interviews and discusses many of the challenges of this art, but only experience and practice will enable you to develop research and interviewing skills.

TO RECORD OR NOT TO RECORD

Anyone planning to conduct an oral history interview should first consider if this is the best way to achieve their goal. Some interviewers, of course, begin with the idea of tape recording a particular person for permanent preservation but others researchers start with a topic which might be investigated in a variety of ways. In the first case, the need for oral history is obvious, but for the latter, there is a real question as to whether an interview is the best way to obtain the information. Interviewers should also consider the broader historical significance of their interview perhaps recording information not immediately pertinent to the interviewer's topic but which will obviously be useful to others.

Any topic which involves oral tradition or living memory is a likely prospect for oral history, especially if there is a shortage of other information and human memory is the only source available. But even in cases where ample printed sources exist it may be necessary, as in the case of a radio program, to produce an oral version or to capture the voice of a protagonist. Decisions to record are made not only in relation to the historical record but also in relation to the goals of the project

Oral history is not the best way to obtain some kinds of information: lists, statistics, and even some

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The besetting sin of the historian has been to tidy up the past, to impute pattern to accident and purpose to fortuity . . . . [Oral History] gives adequate scope to the play of contingency, change, ignorance and sheer stupidity.

—*A. M. Schlesinger, Jr.*, Oral History Newsletter *(1973)*

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kinds of genealogical information, are better recorded on paper even when the original source is the spoken word. Other information is best collected in the form of written questionnaires. If, however, interviewees can add to existing information with first person evaluations, descriptions, or anecdotes, an interview is the best way to proceed.

INTERVIEW TYPES

There are several types of oral history interviews and while there is some overlap among them, they may be classified as follows.

Autobiographical Interview: This is the most personal type of oral history because it is the subjective story of an individual. The interviewee has usually led a colourful life not well-documented in other sources and the events of the interviewee's life are used to record the details of daily life and work. While the interview should be relaxed, and free-flowing, it is also organized into large blocks of time or themes: childhood, school, marriage, work, and so on.

Supplementary Interview: Oral history can add new dimensions and insights to subjects that are already documented by written sources. The supplementary interview is undertaken after the researcher has discovered gaps in the historical record. The outcome of a political leadership campaign, for instance, may be well-known, but the story behind the scenes might only be documented by oral history. Other examples of topics that may be covered by this type of interview are the reasons behind a person's decisions, or a personal view by a participant in a well-known event.

Topical Interview: Topical interviews deal with a single theme or interlocking set of themes. For example, the interviews could deal with an ethnic group such as the Japanese-Canadians, a group such as the elderly, institutions such as a hospital or school, a company or corporation, a special interest group such as a professional association or a labour union, an event such as an election, a war, a depression, immigration, or a social phenomenon such as child-rearing or death. The topical approach combines some of the aspects of autobiographical and supplementary interviewing. Interviews are often conducted with several interviewees, and similar questions are asked to obtain a variety of descriptions and interpretations of the same subject.

Process Interview: This type of interview focusses on change or development in a person, place, industry, institution, or other phenomenon. The interviewer usually follows a formal set of questions which can be asked again at a later date. This type of research is similar in many respects to research done with written questionnaires except that the answers are given in more fluid oral style. The process of becoming a citizen, for example, might be studied by interviewing people at the time they become landed immigrants and again some years later.

Unstructured Narrative: This is a popular type of oral history and a good way to begin interviewing. Interviewees talk about those things which interest them, usually episodes of their own lives or events and people they knew well. Unlike auto-

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Neither oral nor written evidence can be said to be generally superior; it depends on the context.
—Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past *(100)*

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biographical interviewing, the chronological order may be abandoned and the interviewee is permitted to follow thoughts as they occur. Not all interviewees will lend themselves to this form of interview but only a fine speaker or natural raconteur will provide a fascinating narrative. Questioning is often minimal although the interviewer may wish to draw the speaker back to a subject from time to time or ask for more detail.

Most oral history interviews will fall into one of these categories (or a combination of categories). It is helpful in the next stages — research and question set preparation — to know what kind of interview you are preparing for.

THE INTERVIEWER/INTERVIEWEE RELATIONSHIP: PERSONALITY AND CULTURE

Interviewers should understand their own role in creating oral history. Interviews are undertaken in a deliberate and premeditated way and the structure, values and motives involved should be evident in both their creation and use. The personal aspects of the interview are unpredictable and challenging, but even if human variables make oral history difficult to create and use, it also makes it a particularly rich and valuable historical source.

Oral history field work requires different skills than archival or library research, calling for not only general knowledge and background research to earn the respect of the interviewee, but also social skills and the technical skills to unobtrusively operate tape recording equipment. It requires flexibility and resourcefulness to take advantage of opportunities in the course of an interview, the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and different personalities and to bring out the best in both.

An oral history interview is a co-operative effort in which the interviewer, who initiates and structures the interview, bears the major burden of establishing rapport and ensuring sensitive treatment of the person's reminiscences as they are recorded, preserved and later used. You must maintain an honourable relationship with the person who has entrusted personal thoughts and you must maintain good faith in all matters of obligation to the interviewee. You can accomplish this if you develop an honest rapport with the interviewee while at the same time retaining a neutral stance toward the interviewee's ideas, what one writer called "balance of empathy and analytical judgement". Contact between you and the interviewee should begin with a clear explanation of your aims for the interview and the uses to which the material may later be put. This should involve the later signing of a tape release in which the interviewee can place conditions or restrictions on the use of the recording.

A good interviewer is a person of integrity, a good researcher as well as sensitive, affable and resourceful, with an intense interest in both the topic of research and people. Some people are unsuited to the role of interviewer, not so much because they lack intelligence or interest, but because they are inflexible, do not relate well to different types of people or do not respond well in unexpected situations. They may have set views on a subject which they try to get interviewees to support, or they may be compulsive talkers rather than good listeners. Interviews in which the interviewer participates as much as the interviewee and expresses strong opinions may occasionally be successful. More often, however, interviewers need to be able to listen, and provide positive response to the interviewee's account, while providing a subtle (but recognized) structure to the interview.

Even your physical appearance can affect the interview. Manners or dress which are an extreme contrast to those of the interviewee can damage rapport, so a modification of your dress and appearance might sometimes be appropriate. It would be inappropriate, for example, to show up for most interviews in bare feet wearing faded jeans and a gaudy t-shirt, even if that is your usual attire.

A good interviewee is difficult to define. People with many different characteristics and personalities make excellent interviewees. There are, however, some basic qualifications. These include a good memory, the ability to understand and respond to questions and to give articulate answers. People with speech or hearing impairments, poor memories, inability to express thoughts clearly, or other difficulties associated with poor health or advanced age may be unsuitable for oral history, regardless of their experiences. For research purposes, recordings may usefully be made of people who are marginal in some of these areas (such as voice quality), but for other users these considerations will be more significant. Broadcasters, for example, prefer strong and interesting voices. In general, however, the life experiences and memory of a person will be the most important factors in making them a good interviewee.

Communication between you and the interviewee can be confounded by different economic, social or cultural backgrounds. Interviewees may be reluctant to speak candidly with an outsider, especially if you are from a group which has traditionally looked down upon that of the interviewee or even persecuted it. For example, a researcher from a government-sponsored project might have trouble in gaining the confidence of interviewees who are being asked about dissident activities in their past. In addition, the outsider may not understand the particular forms of social interaction in the interviewee's group and not know the appropriate questions. You might ask questions that are relevant to you but meaningless to the interviewee and hence receive only a partial and perhaps distorted picture.

On the other hand, the insider who is from the interviewee's group (and especially one who knows the interviewee personally) may inhibit the interviewee or only ask questions which are exceptional rather than obvious. The interview may disintegrate into a conversation in which everything is alluded to rather than fully identified or described. (Did you ever work with Joe? Oh, sure, great guy. Remember the time he called Sam and . . . etc.) The insider, however,is more likely to understand the background of an interviewee and may be the only person to whom they will confide their story.

There may be considerable conflict of aims or opinion between you and the interviewee. Nevertheless, an experienced interviewer who is aware of the potential problem can direct an interview without leading or bullying the interviewee. The

importance of understanding and empathizing with the interviewee's point of view cannot be overemphasized. This is not hypocrisy. In fact, some would argue that this understanding (or rethinking) is the real aim of historical study. Even the best interviewer may find people with whom he can establish no useful rapport but such cases will be rare. Good interviewers will be able to value their own views while gaining insights into those of others.

RESEARCH

Research begins, in a sense, with the dawning of the idea of an interview, but there are specific types of research for oral history interviews which are emphasized here. In some cases, a certain amount of background digging will be necessary simply to establish the desirability of using oral history as opposed to other types of research. In other cases this need will be evident from the beginning and the effort can focus upon the subject and the interviews that will be conducted. There are usually at least two levels of research involved in oral history: general research on the subject and specific research leading to the selection and interviewing of particular people.

The historian using oral traditions finds himself on exactly the same level as historians using any other kind of historical material. No doubt he will arrive at a lower degree of probability than would otherwise be attained, but that does not rule out the fact that what he is doing is valid, and that it is history.

—*Jan Vansina*, Oral Tradition *(1965)*

Ideally, you should examine all available evidence on your subject in secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources will contain the results of previous studies and these can form the basis for research notes or a chronology indicating the major events and themes and the interpretation of them. If possible you should flesh these out with additional corroborative or supportive information from any primary sources which are available (paper documents, photographs, other recorded interviews, and so on). At the end of this phase, you should know the major facts and themes of your topic, as well as the gaps and questions.

While the sources of information are only limited by the skill, imagination and energy of the researcher, there are a number of likely routes to follow:

1. Books, articles or theses, by or about your proposed interviewee or about the subject matter of the interview.
2. Clipping files of newspaper articles which are maintained by larger libraries, and archives. These are often known as "vertical files" and will have clippings about people, subjects and places.
3. Archival collections of private manuscripts. These are usually indexed by name as well as subject.
4. Archives of government records which show potential interviewees in roles such as public employee, property owner, licencee, court defendant or appellant and so on.
5. Collections of photographs which may be useful for stimulating the memories of interviewees.
6. Newspaper indexes. In British Columbia, for instance, the Legislative Library has provided subject indexes to the major urban papers for the 20th century. The Provincial Archives has done the same for the 19th century.
7. Other oral history. Potential interviewees may already have been interviewed. Failing that, interviews with close associates or others with similar experiences may prove to be excellent sources.

Research might also include talks with experts in the field or long-term residents of an area. It may be a good idea to prepare a written report containing such basic information as a list of important events, dates, place names, well-known people, and a glossary of related terminology, special vocabulary and jargon. When interviewees have been selected, further research will be required to discover basic personal information, much of which will come from the interviewees themselves during preliminary interviews.

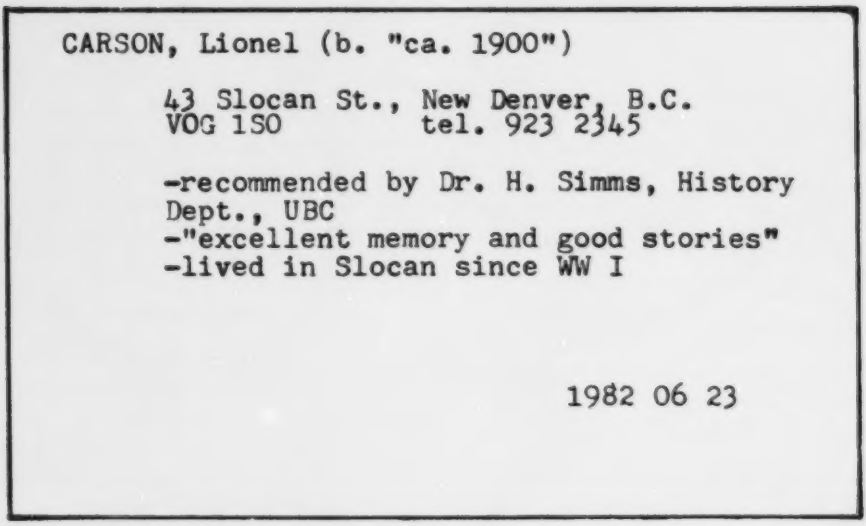
CARSON, Lionel (b. "ca. 1900")
43 Slocan St., New Denver, B.C.
V0G 1S0 tel. 923 2345
-recommended by Dr. H. Simms, History Dept., UBC
-"excellent memory and good stories"
-lived in Slocan since WW I
1982 06 23

Figure 6: Example from a prospective interviewee file.

It is important for you to have absorbed the information well enough to be able to use it in a variety of ways. You should even be prepared to abandon it in the face of new evidence or views which may contradict things previously learned, and may prove to be more accurate, revealing or insightful.

During the research phase it is important to have an efficient system for storing and retrieving information. Every researcher, not only oral history interviewers, must devise a note-taking system. Be sure to be able to retrace your steps. Some piece of information which seemed relatively unimportant at first may assume greater significance as more is learned. Some combination of file cards and files or notebook will be appropriate for most researchers. If you lack confidence in your research skills, you will find research guides or handbooks in university and college bookstores and larger libraries.

Research, is an on-going process that begins long before the interviews and is not finished until the last interview is complete. The quality of the interviews and their future usefulness will depend to a great extent on the thoroughness and skill with which the research has been carried out.

SELECTING INTERVIEWEES

One familiar question is, "How do you choose interviewees?" Sometimes, of course, there is very little choice and you have to make do with those available. However, if it is possible to choose between a number of potential interviewees, you must be selective. Oral history researchers tend to acquire a large volume of material and the information will be diffuse and thin if the interviewer has not been sufficiently selective in choosing interviewees. The question of selectivity is, of course, related to the question of the goals of the research and each potential interviewee should be carefully considered in light of these aims.

Leads to potential interviewees come from many sources: other interviewees, researchers, newspaper clippings or books. Keep track of these people by creating an informal card file of these people. Include as full a name and address as possible as well as notes on how they may be contacted and your source for the lead (see figure 6).

The first contact with the potential interviewee will often be by means of a letter which should provide a general introduction to you and your project and alert the interviewee that they are about to be contacted personally. At this point, the pos-

sibility of a tape recorded interview need not be mentioned for it may frighten some and excite others before the interviewer has a chance to determine whether tape recording is appropriate. This letter will establish the project in the potential interviewee's mind and avoid the misunderstandings or partial comprehension that a brief and unheralded phone call or meeting might generate. Since first impressions are important, it is important that the letter strike the right tone. It should appear professional without being daunting or threatening. Neither should it be inappropriately casual or familiar.

THE PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

The preliminary meeting allows you and interviewee to become acquainted without the distracting presence of the tape recorder.

If the potential interviewee is willing, a personal meeting should be arranged. After this meeting a decision can be made to tape record an interview or merely obtain information in note form and, with appropriate appreciation, complete this contact. If the person is suitable, a tape recorded interview should be arranged at this time. There is a tendency for some people to launch into their story in response to preliminary questions and it is not always wise either to suppress such enthusiasm or to let them exhaust the material before recording can begin. You should assume that no recording will take place but have the recorder ready to use if appropriate.

The purpose of the interview and its relationship to the larger project should be explained mentioning, that the interview will be valuable not only to you but also for historians, educators and future scholars in general. This does not mean that the specific questions need to be reviewed but the interviewee should be advised of the format and general themes to be covered. On the other hand, the interviewee should be tactfully deterred from giving all the details which will be recorded later. Possible future uses of the interview should be discussed at this time as well as the fact that the interviewee will later be asked to sign a release form.

The preliminary interview is also the time to get the interviewee's ideas on the subjects to be covered and the format of the interview. The cooperative aspects of the interview should be stressed and it should be explained that the interview should satisfy both of you. While engaged in this discussion, you should also note any special qualities or talents that the interviewee possesses. Story telling ability, voice characteristics, and sense of humour are qualities that may enhance an interview.

Since this session sets the pace for future meetings, do not be rushed or harried. Try to acquaint yourself with the interviewee's schedule and interests so that interviews can be arranged in a convenient manner. If the interviewee has a spouse, bring him or her into the process in order to gain their cooperation and enthusiasm.

Some interviewees need to be convinced of the value of having their reminiscences recorded and will protest that they have nothing of value to say because their lives were commonplace. In this case, you must reassure them that many people will have an interest in their experiences and that the interview is one good way of permanently preserving them. It is a sad comment on the place of history and tradition in our society that many people are genuinely surprised to hear that their experiences are of interest to others.

There are no absolute rules to indicate the reliability of oral evidence, any more than that of other historical sources . . . . All are fallible and subject to bias and each has varying strengths in different situations.

—*Paul Thompson*, The Voice of the Past *(134)*.

Another concern on the part of some interviewees is the use of the tape recorder itself. They might not mind note taking but are apprehensive about of being tape recorded. In this case, explain the helpfulness of a tape recorder, mentioning how frequently they are now used. You might wish to take the recorder along to this session to show to the interviewee, perhaps even demonstrating it. Whether or not the recorder is actually present, its necessity and technical requirements should be made clear.

In summary, a relaxed but straightforward pattern should be set at this session. The basic purpose of the meeting is to become acquainted with an interesting and enjoyable person.

QUESTION SETS

A question set is simply a list of the questions to be covered in the interview. For some types of interviews (notably the unstructured narrative) the question set in written form is optional; for others it is essential. But even when it is used, it should be a guide and not an inflexible regimen. Most experienced interviewers use question sets in one form or another and they are highly recommended for inexperienced interviewers. If a written question set is to be prepared, the final version should be compiled after the preliminary meeting, using the information that is derived from it.

Question set formation is a creative part of the interview because you are deciding what will be included and what will not. You are also giving an overall structure to the interview that will obtain the best result both as to information and the natural drama of events.

It is a common practice to begin the first recorded session with basic biographical information such as full name, place and date of birth, and a few questions on family, social and occupational background. This is a good way to ease the interviewee into the question and answer format. It not only clearly identifies the interviewee but also establishes the chronological and social context. Future users will know of the type of person being interviewed and have a frame of reference for evaluating the material on the tape. It is not essential, however, to have this information on the tape so long as it is recorded on tape labels or other forms. With some interviewees it may be preferable to begin on a less formal note, such as a favorite story.

Most interviews require between 10 and 30 questions per hour although some people may need almost no prompting. If the interviewee is fluent and responsive, it is possible to frame a series of fairly specific questions and still get a wide range of material. On the other hand, if the interviewee tends to be terse, concise, or shy, more general questions may produce a better result.

A good method for organizing a question set is on file cards cards [see figure 7]. Questions can be noted on these cards at any time and in the order they occur to the interviewer. Before the interview takes place, the cards are sorted into chronological, thematic or other order.

When a number of interviews are conducted on a closely related topic (as when the Provincial Archives interviewed all cabinet ministers who had served prior to 1972) it is a good idea to compile the question set for the initial interview in colour-coded sections. Questions on topic A would be on white cards, questions on topic B on blue cards, and so on. For subsequent interviews, a question set will be much easier to put together, with large groups of questions drawn from the previous set.

The form and content of the questions are extremely important. The memories an interviewee selects are influenced by the format and tone of the question which can introduce erroneous information into the interviewees's account or may even alter the memory of the event.*

Interviews which seek very specific information or answers from different interviewees which can then be compared or quantified must have a more structured approach. A precisely worded question set may be essential so that questions are exactly the same for each interviewee. This questionnaire approach has limitations since people do not always understand the question in the same way, nor answer in a way that can be compared. But its greatest shortcomings is that it inhibits descriptive and non-conforming answers. It is a good idea to supplement standardized questions with some that allow for open-ended responses. Questionnaires may yield some fine historical statistics but they make poor oral history.

Stressing one type of question can adversely shape the interview. Closed questions will yield too many yes or no answers while too many open-ended questions can result in an interview which lacks purpose and direction. Negative or challenging questions can mar an interview by forcing interviewees into a defensive position in which they feel threatened and less willing to answer. A public figure may tolerate or even enjoy probing, challenging and argumentative questioning, but this technique would probably be inappropriate for a person who has never been interviewed.

Novice interviewers may be tempted to compose a finely-honed set of questions and follow it slavishly. The compilation of an apparently ideal list

* See the work of psychologist Elizabeth Loftus on the subject of eye witness testimony.

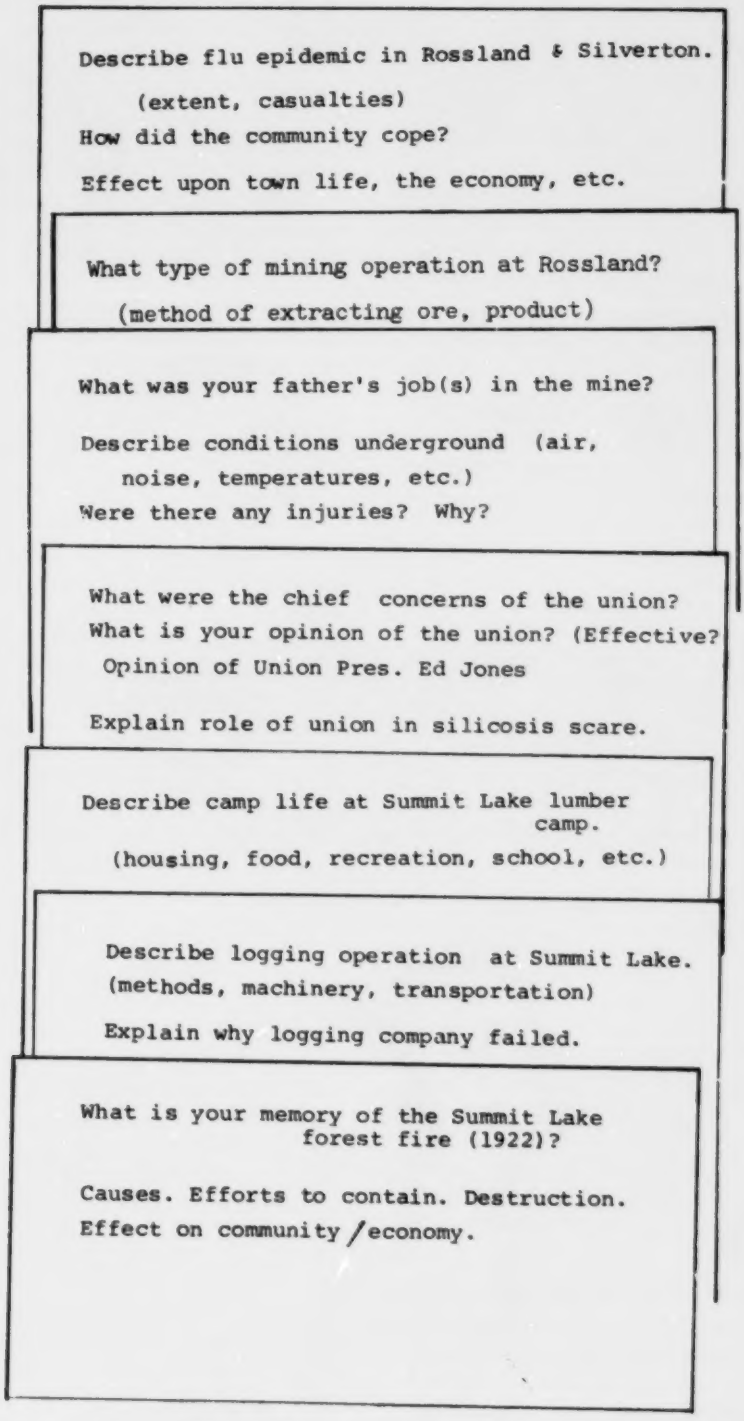
Describe flu epidemic in Rossland & Silverton.
(extent, casualties)
How did the community cope?
Effect upon town life, the economy, etc.
What type of mining operation at Rossland?
(method of extracting ore, product)
What was your father's job(s) in the mine?
Describe conditions underground (air,
noise, temperatures, etc.)
Were there any injuries? Why?
What were the chief concerns of the union?
What is your opinion of the union? (Effective?
Opinion of Union Pres. Ed Jones
Explain role of union in silicosis scare.
Describe camp life at Summit Lake lumber
camp.
(housing, food, recreation, school, etc.)
Describe logging operation at Summit Lake.
(methods, machinery, transportation)
Explain why logging company failed.
What is your memory of the Summit Lake
forest fire (1922)?
Causes. Efforts to contain. Destruction.
Effect on community/economy.

Figure 7: Question set on file cards.

may be a good exercise in preparing for the interview, but you should be ready to use it flexibly (or perhaps not at all) depending on the give and take of the actual interview. There are so many variables in and interview that a rigid set of questions may prove detrimental. Insights that might have been gained by spontaneous questions and exploration of tangents are lost. A question set should be used as a guide, not as a rule.

In addition to the classic objective questions of who, what, when and where, questions which invite a more open-ended, descriptive or reflective answers, should also be used. Questions which begin: "Describe . . .", "Tell me about . . .", "Explain . . .", "Expand on . . .", "Compare . . .", or questions which evoke the senses (What did you see, hear, feel, taste or even smell) are more likely to trigger the richly descriptive anecdotes which are the strength of oral history. Interviewers have had great success with questions such as:

—Take me on an imaginary walk around your farm at the time you were a little girl.

—What would I have seen on my first day underground at that mine?

—If you walked up one side and down the other of the main street of your town what would you have seen and who would you have met?

Examples of closed and open-ended questions are given in figure 8.

It is also important not to suggest a required answer in the wording of your question. In psychological jargon this is called the "demand characteristic". In a courtroom, a lawyer might be accused

OPEN-ENDED AND CLOSED QUESTIONS

Closed	*Open-ended or evocative*
Where were you born?	What do you remember about the place where you were born?
Where were your parents born?	What did your parents tell you about their lives in . . . ?
Did your family have gatherings?	Describe your family gatherings?
What holidays did your family celebrate?	How were holidays celebrated in your family?
Was religion important to your family?	Tell me about religious observances in your family?
When did you finish school?	How did your formal education end?
How did you travel to Canada?	What were conditions like on your journey to Canada?
When did you arrive in Canada?	What did you notice first when you arrived in Canada?
Where did you first work when you left school?	Tell me about your experiences finding work when you left school?
Did you and your friends play games as children?	Describe some games you played as a child?
Did many people come here to homestead?	How did people set about homesteading in this area?
Were you a soldier in World War I?	Tell me about your experiences during World War I?

EXAMPLES OF LEADING QUESTIONS

Leading	*Neutral*
You must certainly have been happy on election night?	How did you feel on election night?
Did you come to Canada then?	What did you do then?
You didn't like Mr. X, did you?	Tell me about Mr. X?
What did you think of Mr. Jones' outrageous behaviour?	What did Mr. Jones do then?

of leading the witness. In oral history interviewing, it is simply bad practice in that it precludes a full, frank answer. Figure 9 gives some examples.

Some interviewees ask to see the questions in advance. While there is no fixed rule, it is generally advisable to discourage this. Instead, offer them a list of topics to be covered, saving the exact wording of the questions for the interview itself. This enables them to refresh their memory about certain things if they wish but will prevent them from rehearsing answers to specific questions. It is not unusual for interviewees to prepare written answers which they then propose to read. While this is well-meaning, it makes for disastrous oral history since nearly everyone tells a story spontaneously far better than they can read it. This robs the interview of its main strength, the spontaneity of a first-person recollection of events. Of course, if the interviewee makes the submission of a question set in advance a precondition of the interview, then you will have to comply with the request.

THE INTERVIEW

Equipment check: Before setting out for each interview, you should check your equipment and ensure (perhaps by use of a checklist) that no small but necessary widget is about to be left behind. The first tape to be used may be put into the machine and it and the box labelled in advance to allow you to set the equipment up more quickly.

Starting an interview: There are different ways of beginning the first interview. Some identifying information at the beginning of the tape itself is very useful to users as well as being one additional safeguard against loss of identification on labels and in files. This introduction should contain the name of the interviewer and the interviewee (with spellings, if necessary), the place and date, and other information if required. This "verbal label" (which can be recorded before going to the interview) should read something like:

> This is the second tape of an interview with Lionel James Carson, C-A-R-S-O-N, recorded on February the second, 1984, at his home in New Denver, B.C. The interviewer is Donald John Robbins.

Other interviews start by giving a brief biography of the interviewee, though this is not usually required in an autobiographical interview. Moreover, many consider it a distraction of major proportions to read this onto the tape in front of the interviewee, or even to play it back at the interview. Another option is to leave a space at the beginning of the tape then insert the information when the interview has been completed.

Some interviewers debate whether the interviewee should be told exactly when the recorder has been turned on. They fear that this, like the introductory comments, may make the interviewee freeze or become very formal, while a more "subtle" beginning encourages them to be informal and spontaneous. However, we discourage anyone from

recording without the permission and knowledge of the interviewee. It is better to begin with some casual conversation and for the interviewer to set the appropriate tone without this type of subterfuge.

Getting people to talk: This problem is usually due to an initial period of shyness, but skill will be required if the interviewee develops "mike fright." This is often a temporary thing and once they begin to talk they gradually gain confidence and become more relaxed. Interviewees who are uneasy should be reassured about the value of their contribution to the historical record and to your study. A good tactic is to begin the interview with simple, obvious questions (birthplace, birthdate, parents' background, or a description of the person's special qualifications to comment on a particular subject). If you are at ease and able to set the tone, this will influence the interviewee's view of the process.

While getting the interviewee to "loosen up" can require skill on your part, getting the interviewee to stop talking or to talk about the desired topic can be even more challenging. Tact and persistence may be necessary because there is no single answer to this problem. Some of the tangents may be valuable, opening new areas of investigation, while others serve the function of allowing interviewees to tell those things which they consider important, even if you don't.

It is important to deal tactfully with this situation, since cutting them off too abruptly or displaying boredom or irritation will harm the rest of the interview. On the other hand, you must soone. or later direct the interviewee back to the main area of interest. Sometimes this delicate problem may be handled with a few subtle words in a well-timed interjection. Simply prefacing the remark with words such as, "Getting back to . . ." will be enough of a hint for sensitive interviewees. Failing that, the direct approach will surely work: "Excuse

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[Oral tradition] may be false or true but it is always an authentic expression of its author's personality and culture.

—*Henry Glassie*, Oral History Review *(1971)*

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me, this is interesting but not really relevant here" or "Pardon me, but this is for another interview. Could we get back to. . . ." As a last resort, you can "run out of tape". Fortunately, cases of mike fright or unwanted loquaciousness are relatively rare and, while everyone occasionally finds a challenging case of one or the other, you can usually overcome the difficulty.

An oral history interview should be a dialogue where the interviewee's side dominates. Nevertheless, the interviewer's part of this two-way conversation includes much more than simply asking the questions in the order they appear on the

RESEARCH AND PREPARATION CHECKLIST

—Have you examined research sources?

—Do you know the major themes, gaps in knowledge and controversies of the topic?

—Do you have a sufficient general knowledge of the subject to enable you to explore unexpected topics during the interview or allow you to pick up inconsistencies or discrepancies in the interviewee's account.

—Have you had a successful preliminary interview?

—Is the selection of interviewees appropriate to the topic? Are they representative of the group, era or organization being studied?

—Has the interviewee been given a clear description of your reasons for wanting an interview and, the planned use of the recordings?

—Have you prepared an adequate question set?

—Have you examined your own biases and assumptions toward the subject and the interviewee?

—Are you able to establish rapport with the interviewee?

TAPE RECORDER TROUBLE CHART

PROBLEM	*CHECK*
Tape not turning	—Power off or not plugged in properly
	—Tape not threaded correctly
	—Batteries dead or inserted incorrectly
	—Cassette at end or inserted upside down
	—Microphone switch off
	—Pause button depressed
Tape turning but no sound or extremely poor sound	—Speaker switch off sound or extremely
	—Headphone plugged in poor sound
	—Tape twisted
	—Volume control turned down
	—Damaged microphone
	—Heads very dirty
Record button won't go or stay down	—Not engaging control buttons in correct sequence (check instructions)
	—Instant stop on (some models)
	—Cassette safety tabs punched out (see figure 12)
	—Tape at end (auto shut-off)
Muffled sound	—Heads very dirty
	—Tape pressure pad missing
	—Head alignment required
	—Poor original recording
Low volume — one channel	—Volume controls not balanced
	—Head height adjustment required
	—Tape creased
	—Poor original recording

question set. During an interview, attention is focussed on the interviewee and it is up to you to encourage responses. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways with verbal and non-verbal cues. The tone of your voice, the nod of your head, or the way you raise your eyebrow all communicate something. By reacting positively, you can demonstrate an interest in what is being said. In particular, eye-to-eye contact and appropriate smiles and laughter encourage the interviewee. Experienced inter-

viewers even develop a silent laugh that does not interfere with the words of the interviewee.

While it is best to refrain from passing judgment on what is said, no reaction at all can be unproductive. A simple "Yes, I see" is often all that is needed. However, you must be careful not to constantly interfere with the voice of the interviewee. A steady stream of "Uh-huh" and "Is that so" can be as as intrusive as other acoustic problems such as air conditioning or traffic noise.

Even the use, conscious or otherwise, of body language is important. Sitting more or less erect, inclining the body slightly towards the interviewee and maintaining eye contact and an open and friendly visage will give the interviewee the subtle message, "Here is someone genuinely interested in my recollections." While it is possible to overwork this non-verbal communication to the point of obvious insincerity, its significance must be understood.

Controversial subjects: Potentially sensitive topics such as sex, crime, religion and the exercise of power should be explored with caution. These can either be left to the end of the interview or treated in a low-key and matter-of-fact manner when they naturally arise. The approach depends on the nature of the person and the type of material sought.

A related problem occurs when the interviewee freely provides highly sensitive or even potentially slanderous information or asks that the recorder be turned off while a confidence is shared with you. In the first case, you should consider whether or not you can be held liable in a legal action for your part in recording the slander. Consequently, you might wish to place a restriction on part of an interview even if the interviewee has not asked for one. In the second case, you should try to get the interviewee to make their comments on the record by emphasizing the value of such information for future researchers and pointing out the ways in which access to the tape can be restricted to protect confidentiality. Another approach is to discuss the sensitive area beforehand and negotiate how to get the information on tape without endangering or offending someone.

One should adopt the attitude that the tape recorder serves rather than controls the flow of the interview. Accordingly, the tape recorder may be stopped if someone needs to regain composure, clarify a question, or refresh a memory. If the interviewee appears reluctant or uncomfortable, the tape recorder can be stopped and the difficulty discussed. It may even be preferable to erase a question or answer and start again.

Finding "The Truth": The exploration of discrepancies in the interviewee's story can usually best be accomplished in an indirect way. In most cases, the interviewee will not have set out to deceive you or distort the historical record but will merely have forgotten the exact details or remembered them incorrectly. You can ask the same question in several ways or have the interviewee discuss the same topic from different perspectives (their own role, chronology, attitudes, motives and feelings, descriptions of other people and their roles,

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It is not enough to know what happened, we must also know what people think happened.
—J. and E. M. Wilkie, Elitelore

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and so on) without pressing them directly or questioning the validity of their memories. For instance, "The *Sun* said ABC but you say XYZ; can you help me straighten out this discrepancy?" is likely to be a more productive question than "XYZ! Are you kidding? What really happened is ABC, isn't it?" The role of the devil's advocate or information seeker is often superior to confrontation. We are not ruling out the blunt approach, simply cautioning against its inappropriate use.

Length of interviews: It is difficult to say what is the ideal length of an interview session. You must judge the best length according to the particular person and circumstances. It is sometimes said that there should be a one to two hour limit on the interview, but this is not always practical. Some interviewees may be exhausted by a much shorter time, while others will thrive on this opportunity to reminisce and will be frustrated at having to stop after an hour or two.

We have standardized our tape length to 30 minutes per track which allows the interviewer a few moments to assess the situation after each half hour. You use your discretion and not exhaust the interviewee or yourself, even if spirits are willing.

Other factors being equal, a number of one or two hour interviews are better than a single long session. Long interviews lead to exhausted interviewers and interviewees who are more likely to make mistakes and less likely to expand on important topics. Multiple sessions allow interviewees to think more about the topics that are being covered. Similarly, you will have time to consider some of the points that have been raised and prepare questions to clarify or expand them if necessary. There is no value in rushing through an interview when patience and a slower pace will yield better results.

Interviewing more than one person: What about interviewing two or more people at one time, as is frequently suggested? In general, we find that the problems outweigh the advantages. The problems include: difficulty in identifying who is speaking at a particular moment; getting several people's voices adequately covered by only one or two microphones; people talking simultaneously; and having the interview degenerate into a series of contradictions and disputes or an extended "in joke." On the other hand a small group of interviewees may stimulate one another into producing a truly marvelous recording. Caution is the key; you must use discretion in suggesting or accepting this type of interview situation.

Special locations and props: You should consider recording the interview at a spot appropriate to the subject matter. For instance, we have had excellent success in interviewing a politician in the legislative chamber where he served for many years. His reminiscences gained vitality and immediacy as he recalled successes and defeats with precision and piquancy. An interview could be recorded at an old family home, at the scene of a historic event, or any other appropriate location. The aim should be to gain the flavour of "actuality" recording while shaking the interviewee out of standard ways of thinking about and discussing certain events.

The use of props, such as photographs, maps, films, or sound recordings, may result in an improved reminiscence. For instance, showing the interviewee a photograph of his or her parents or playing a tape recording of their voices might result in an excellent oral recollection. Playing a politician a recording of a former opponent making a provocative statement might also produce an interesting and worthwhile response. You should be wary of turning the interview into a multimedia extravaganza, however, and you should be careful to document your activities in this regard. Notes should be kept along with the recording which will indicate what props were used in the interview so they may, if necessary, be examined later by users of the recording. Copies of the photographs (or at least instructions as to where they may be found) should be kept in the documentation file accompany each recording.

Photographs: Taking photographs of the interviewee at the time of the interview can add valuable information about an interview and might one day prove extremely valuable to a future user of the interview. A number of oral history projects have included this procedure as a regular part of the interview process. Another approach is for an artist to make sketches of the interviewee and the interview situation.

Recording precise information: One widely recognized problem with oral history is the fact that, in certain situations, it lacks precision. A couple of examples will illustrate this point. If the interviewee says, "I was shot right here," the statement will be accompanied by a geture so that the location is perfectly clear to the interviewer, but not to a later listener. If the interviewee says that his friend was "Derek McDonald," you might be unsure whether it was *the* Derek McDonald or Derrick, Deryk, Darrick, MacDonald, Macdonald, or MacDonnell. In these cases, you must ask for descriptions which will be clearly understood by a listener. The interviewee might be asked to spell proper names for both clarity of identification and as an aid in future transcription. To avoid the "spelling bee syndrome," some interviewers collect these ambiguities throughout the interview and clarify them all at once in the form of notes which are filed with the interview.

The facts that you and your interviewee have in your heads will be of no value to future users of the tape. If the interviewee mentions something about which you have been previously informed off the tape, you should tactfully clarify the information. Special terms should be explained. "Gurdies" may be familiar to fishermen and "hi-ballers" to loggers but may not be to future users of the recording.

The proper set-up for a two-microphone interview. The mikes are placed close to both speakers; the recorder may be easily monitored; the interviewer may consult the question set without interfering with the microphone; eye-to-eye contact is easily made.

Monitoring sound quality: During the interview you should regularly check that the tape recorder is operating properly and that the meters show appropriate responses to the voices. After the first 10 minutes of recording or so play back a few seconds of the recording. This not only ensures that the recording is being properly made but might also identify any previously unnoted acoustical problems.

A nervous interviewee will sometimes fidget with the microphone or the cord, or make some other nervous and noisy gesture near the microphone. While you may be reluctant to point these things out to an already nervous subject, it is imperative that this be done. If you have properly paved the way for the production of a high quality sound recording, there should be no problem. The ideal solution is to have a technician present for the recording who can be responsible for equipment and sound quality, but this is seldom possible, and you must do the best job possible on your own.

Ending the interview: At the end of an interview it is a good idea to end the specific questioning and ask the interviewee a few general and positive questions ("How do you feel now about your long career as a locomotive engineer?"). Ask if they have anything to add to the interview, giving them a few moments to think about any additions ("Is there anything you would like to add or any topic we haven't discussed?") Ending the interview in this way helps to reinforce the bond that has been established between you and interviewee.

* * *

While this section on the interview has covered a number of opportunities and pitfalls of interviewing, it is far from a definitive discussion. The only way to become a good interviewer is to actively work at it. Just as all interviewees are different, so too are all interviewers. It serves no purpose to dream of producing flawless interviews; they don't

exist. It is better to think of an interview as raw material containing some inappropriate questions, repetitions and tangents that will be ignored or edited out by a user. As an interviewer, you should concentrate on getting a dynamic and complete interview rather than nervously worry about a flaw here and there. Develop your own style that is flexible enough for any interview situation while still suiting you. This, combined with thoughtful preparation and practise will make you a successful interviewer.

LEGAL FORMS AND RELEASES*

One of the most vexing problems facing people concerned with oral history is the legal status of the completed interviews. Do they belong to the interviewer or interviewee? Who has the right to copy or reproduce the interview? Who has the right to publish its contents? Is a release form necessary and, if so, what should it contain?

Oral history researchers in Canada should be aware that most of the guides and handbooks about oral history originate in the United States and that the advice they give regarding the legalities of oral history reflect American rather than Canadian law. The most significant legal difference between oral history interviews made in Canada and those made in the United States have to do with the ownership of the recordings and their copyright.

In Canada, the interview (or any other type of sound recording) is owned by the person or organization responsible for making the recording, the person who initiated the interview, supplied the tape recorder and tape, and pressed the buttons that enabled the recording to take place.† In the United States, however, rights to the recording are held jointly by the interviewer and the interviewee. Many of the legal forms used by American practitioners of oral history are designed to transfer these rights to interviewers or the oral history programs for which they work and they are neither appropriate nor necessary in Canada.

Nevertheless, we strongly advise interviewers to obtain release forms at the time of the interview. The conditions of the release form will define the rights of the various parties. Private researchers should include a clause which would allow for the eventual deposit of the interview in a public archive.

Even though an interviewee's release form may not be strictly necessary in Canada, it is a gesture of the good faith of the interviewer, indicating that the wishes of the interviewee as to access and use of the interview will be observed. It should be noted that if the signed release form specifies the ownership of copyright, that this agreement would override the general case where copyright is owned by the person who made the recording. Researchers who undertake interviews as employees, contractors or agents of an institution (such as an archives or historical society) should know that the rights to the interview will be owned by the sponsoring institution. A release form is shown in Figure 10.

It might be argued that the act of giving the interview to an interviewer or an archives means that all associated rights are transferred as well. However, a well-designed release form will eliminate any ambiguity. There are, different types of ownership of sound recordings beyond the physical ownership of the tape recording itself, including copyright, the right to make multiple copies, and the right to publish the contents, either as sound recordings or in printed form. In Canada, copyright exists for 50 years from the time of creation of a sound recording and need not be specially claimed or registered.

The safeguards of the tape release form, particularly for the interviewee, should be explained early in the interview process. A further discussion of the conditions the interviewee might place on the use of the tape takes place after the interview is completed. This explanation requires some delicacy as some interviewees will be anxious when confronted with a legal form. They might be prompted

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* This section has been written by a layman, not a lawyer. While it is given with the backing of several years experience in the field, it is not intended to substitute for a legal opinion. The forms and procedures are those of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Specific questions on any legal matter pertaining to oral history should be referred to a lawyer.

† The *Copyright Act* states that copyright "means the sole right to produce or reproduce the work or any substantial part thereof in any material form whatever . . ." (Sec. 3 (1)). "The term for which copyright shall subsist in [sound recordings] shall be fifty years from the making of the original plate . . . and the person who was the owner of such original plate . . . shall be deemed to be the author . . ." (Sec. 10).

Province of
British Columbia

Ministry of
Provincial Secretary
and Government Services

Archives
Parliament Buildings
Victoria
British Columbia
V8V 1X4

TAPE RELEASE

Name: Carson, Lionel James Accn. No. 138:
1-4

Subject to the conditions noted below, I release all rights to this recording to the Provincial Archives of British Columbia where it may be used under guidelines established by the Provincial Archives of British Columbia.

Conditions: none ☑ or

Signed: L. J. Carson

date: Feb. 2, 1984

Agreed: Donald J. Robbins

date: Feb. 2, 1984

Figure 10: Tape release form.

INTERVIEW COMPLETION CHECKLIST

—Is the original recording clearly labelled "original"?

—Are the recordings labelled verbally on the recording itself as well as in writing on the tape reel and the container?

—Has the interviewee signed the release form?

—Is the door open for further contacts and interviews, if necessary?

—Is the interviewer prepared to fulfil all obligations arising from the interview (requests for copies; concerns about use)? Is responsible use guaranteed as promised?

—Are tapes to be copied immediately and placed in storage with appropriate conditions for the permanent preservation of the recording?

—Has the interviewee been formally thanked?

—Are forms containing background information and content summaries completed?

to put restrictions on the use of the recording merely because the possibility of doing do is there. You should carefully explain the benefits of the release to both parties and the desirability of having the interview free of access restrictions.

Among the restrictions which might be used are:

—closed until a specific date;
—closed under the occurence of a specific event, such as someone's death or retirement;
—permission required to consult tape or transcript or to cite it or quote from it;
—restricted from or permission required to broadcast or use in a film or other audio-visual production;
—compulsory credit if used.

POST INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

Throughout the interview process, you should be assembling information which will help to provide access to the tapes. A tape recording, unlike a printed document or an artifact, cannot be identified at a glance. Without proper labelling and content information, the information on the tape is inaccessible and easily lost or destroyed. The importance of a few basic documents cannot be overestimated.

Tape box labels should be completed immediately after the interview (see Figure 11). This label should include the full names of interviewee and interviewer, plus the date and place of the interview. A descriptive title indicating content will be enormously helpful. For example, "Mining Memories" might be a fine title for a book or radio documentary, but something more pedestrian such as "The Slocan Valley: 1918-1945 ' is a superior title for an interview on that topic. In the case of reels, the reel itself should also be labelled in case it becomes separated from its box. The original recordings should be clearly labelled "original". This will identify them as unique material and prevent inadvertent erasure. If the original recording is a cassette, you should remove the push-out safety tabs on the back to prevent accidental reuse of the original. When the tabs are removed, the cassette cannot be re-recorded (see figure 12).

After the recording has been completed and the tape release signed there still remain a few matters to be completed. You should fulfill any promise for copies of the interview as soon as possible and you should express appreciation for the time, effort and contribution of the interviewee. A letter to the interviewee with formal thanks is recommended as a token of the contribution they have made. These gestures are time-consuming but fundamental. You should leave the door open for further contacts; in a series of interviews, new information may suggest a supplementary interview.

INTERVIEW EVALUATION

You should evaluate each interview session by listening to the tapes and reviewing the sound quality and content as actually recorded. This is useful not only to create a summary of the tape's contents, but also to discover what subjects need to

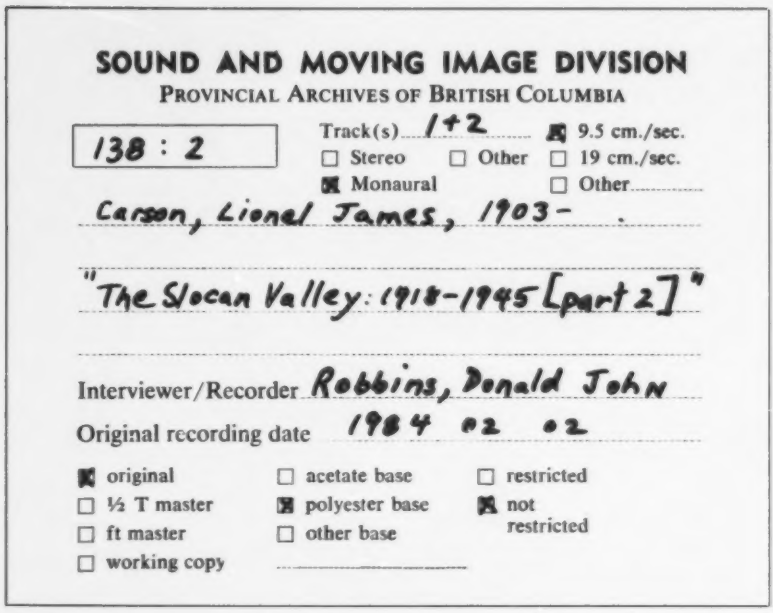

Figure 11: Tape box label.

INTERVIEW EVALUATION CHECKLIST

—Was the tape recorder checked out prior to the interview?

—Have you chosen an appropriate microphone?

—Is there a blank leader followed by introductory material with names, date and location of the interview?

—Is the beginning of the interview positive? Does it put the interviewee at ease and introduce the person and topic?

—Is rapport established and maintained throughout the interview?

—Are you empathetic toward the interviewee's point of view?

—Have you intruded upon the interview in an undesirable fashion (unwarranted leading questions, opinions, distracting comments or noises)?

—Is the question set used flexibly? Are questions asked one at a time and in a clear, coherent manner?

—Is there an appropriate mixture of closed and open-ended questions? Is there an appropriate use of leading, loaded or provocative questions?

—Are the original aims and goals of the interview achieved or changed?

—Are all planned subjects explored satisfactorily?

—Have clues, vague answers and interesting tangents been followed up? Have discrepancies, inconsistencies and contradictions been explored and tested appropriately?

—Could the sound quality have been improved (voices clear; background noise)?

—Was the equipment monitored successfully and unobtrusively?

—Were props (if any) used successfully and unobtrusively?

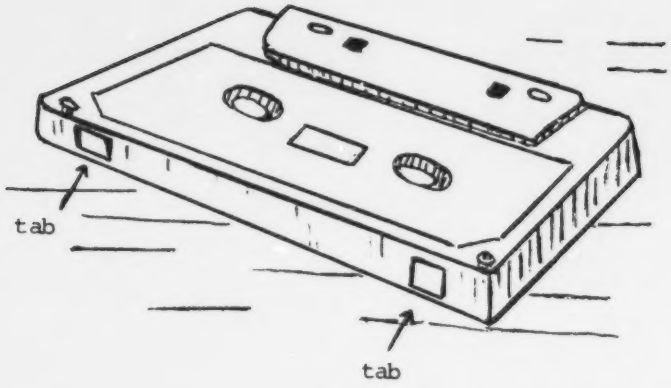

Figure 12: Cassette push-out safety tabs.

be covered or returned to in subsequent interviews. These aspects of the interview process which should be evaluated are those included in the three checklists that follow: research and preparation check list, interview evaluation check list and interview completion check list.

Interviews by novices will have high and low points and with time and experience, they will improve. Listening to your first tapes, you will be able to identify many of your own shortcomings. We recommend that all interviewers make a verbatim transcript of at least one early tape. In this way, many of the problems of interviewing will be clearly evident and the exercise will give you a respect for the work of transcribers.

* * *

You are now at the end of a major phase, the planning and execution of your interview. You have made a tangible record of the previously intangible memories of your interviewee. The task remains, however, of making this interview a permanently preserved historical document.

FROM ARTIFACT TO DOCUMENT: ARCHIVAL PROCEDURES

Once the interview has been completed, the task of preserving the recording and making its contents accessible begins. The point has often been made, but it is worth repeating: an interview is only a useful historical document if it is permanently preserved and made ready for research. This chapter discusses the preservation of oral history interviews including identification, copying and storage, indexing and transcription. Two major considerations must be kept in mind. First, the need for proper storage conditions and handling procedures to ensure the permanence of the recording, and second, the need to make the contents of the interview accessible.

BASIC DOCUMENTATION

The documentation of an oral history interview consists of three essential records.

1) An identification file which records the assignment of permanent identification numbers (figure 13)

2) An interview file which contains:
   — Tape release with restrictions, if any (figure 10)
   — Information form including summary of contents (figure 14)
   — Verbatim transcript, if one exists
   — Associated documentation (question sets, photographs, correspondence)

3) A name/subject index (figure 16) which provides access to the interview by:
   —Name of interviewer
   —Name of interviewee
   —Subjects (people, places, objects and concepts)

The following sections discuss these three records in detail.

The best method for organizing and storing a collection of oral history interviews is through a system of unique identifying numbers. Once assigned to a tape, the identification number is applied not only to the recording but also to all associated paper work. It is used to keep track of these documents during processing and as an order for shelving the interviews. A simple consecutive numbering system is recommended. While some projects have incorporated some additional data in the number (date of interview, for example: 1983:14/10) and others have even attempted to incorporate subject codes (FORESTS 1005.2), these latter systems are cumbersome and inefficient.

A record of number assigned must be kept in a book or on file cards. We suggest the following minimum information to be recorded:
   —identifying number (and the date it was assigned)
   —names of principal speakers and the interviewer
   —date of original recording
   —physical description (quantity and type of tape)
   —restrictions on use

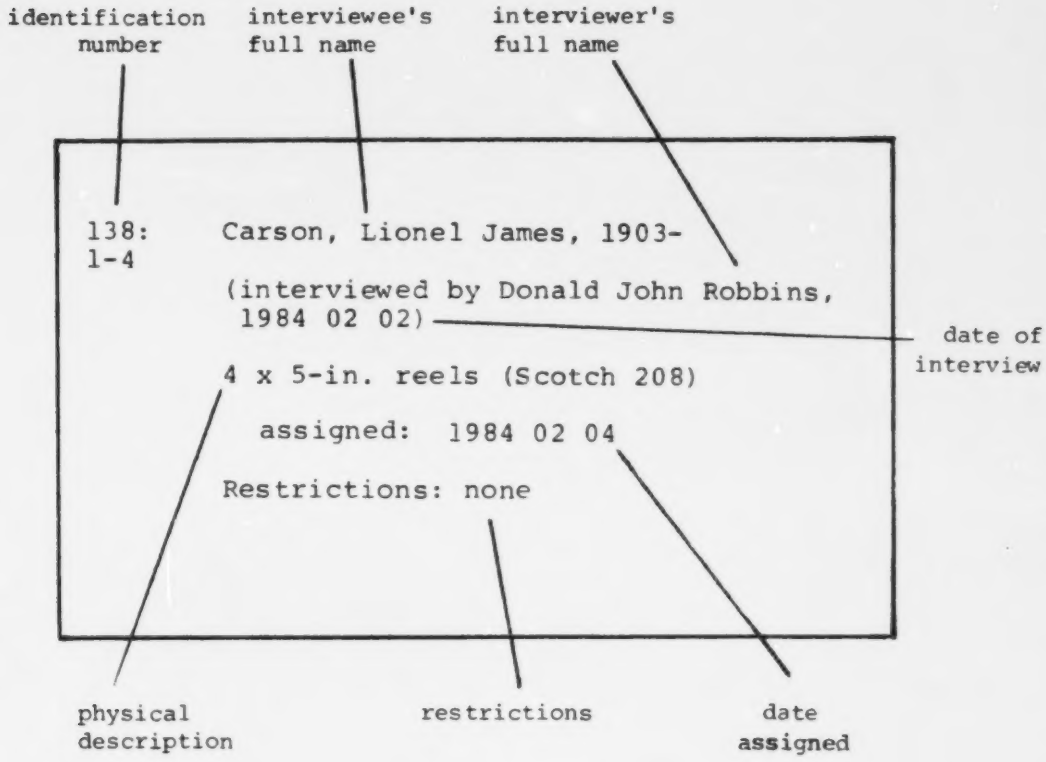

Figure 13: Interview identification card.

Figure 13 gives an example of an interview register in card form.

There are a few simple principles for establishing a numerical identification system. One base number should be used for each interview and each tape in the interview should be subnumbered, so as to uniquely identify it. In our continuing example of the interview with Carson, it is the 138th interview and is four tapes in extent so it would be assigned the numbers 138:1, 138:2, 138:3 and 138:4. The card shown in figure 13 would be made at the time the numbers are assigned and filed numerically by the base number, 138, i.e., following base number 137. The next interview would be assigned base number 139. All paper work associated with the interview will also be identified by this number. Tapes should not be arranged by subject matter prior to numbering. Tapes from one interviewer should not be mixed with those of another, even if both have interviewed the same person.

COPYING, HANDLING AND STORAGE

To ensure the survival of the interviews in their original form, duplicate copies should be produced soon after the interview. Unfortunately, no widely accepted national or international standards exist for the re-recording or playback of sound in any form, including oral history, although the leading international associations of sound archives are moving in

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The process of writing history changes along with the content. The use of oral evidence breaks through the barriers between the chroniclers and their audience; between the educational institution and the outside world.

—*Paul Thompson*, The Voice of the Past *(7)*

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this direction. Even with a minimum of equipment and technical expertise, however, high quality copies of interviews can be produced. Many manuals and books on tape recording provide details on how to duplicate audio tape (see Appendix A). This section also discusses basic handling procedures.

Copies of original interviews are necessary for two reasons. First, they protect the original from wear and possible abuse during processing, transcription and subsequent use, and second, they provide a security copy should the original be damaged or lost. The original should only be used for making copies. In particular, an original should never be used for transcription since the repeated starting and stopping and high speed rewinding can cause damage. This problem is accentuated if tape recorders are not maintained properly, or if the recording is a cassette.

After the recording has been assigned a number, it can be labelled (if not already labelled) as in figure 11 and prepared for copying. To take the Carson example, a cassette copy for research and/or transcription purposes should be produced. The only equipment required is a reel-to-reel tape recorder (perhaps the one on which you made the interview), a cassette recorder, a cable to connect them (called a patch cord), and a set of headphones.

First, the two recorders are joined together by the patch cord. The patch cord comes from the external speaker jack of the reel-to-reel recorder and plugs into the input jack of the cassette machine. A test should be conducted to determine if the patch has been successful. Label the cassette before you begin (see figure 14). Insert the cassette and then advance it so that the leader tape winds onto the takeup reel and the cassette is ready to record. The record level is now monitored by putting the cassette machine into the record mode with the pause switch on. The reel-to-reel machine with the original is now played. While watching the VU meter and monitoring with headphones, adjust the volume setting on the cassette machine.

Once the sound level has been satisfactorily checked, rewind and cue the original, then start the copying machine by releasing the pause switch and start the recorder holding the original. By starting the copying machine first, you ensure that the beginning of the original recording is not missed. Extreme care should be taken to preserve the se-

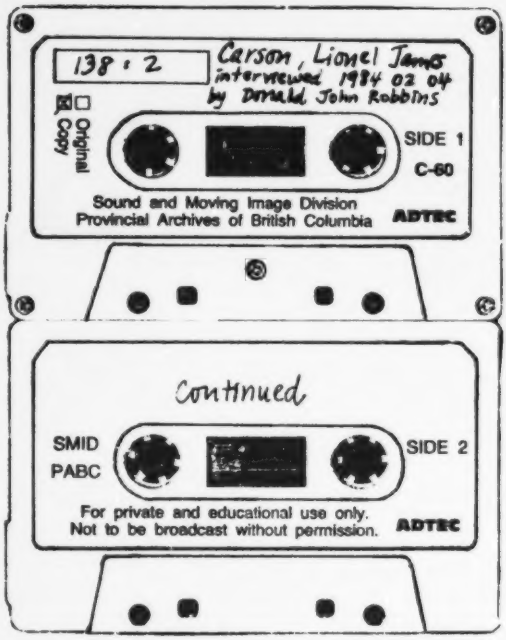


Figure 14: Labels for cassette copy.

quence of tracks in the original. The original and the copy are shelved in separate locations between numbers 137 and 139.

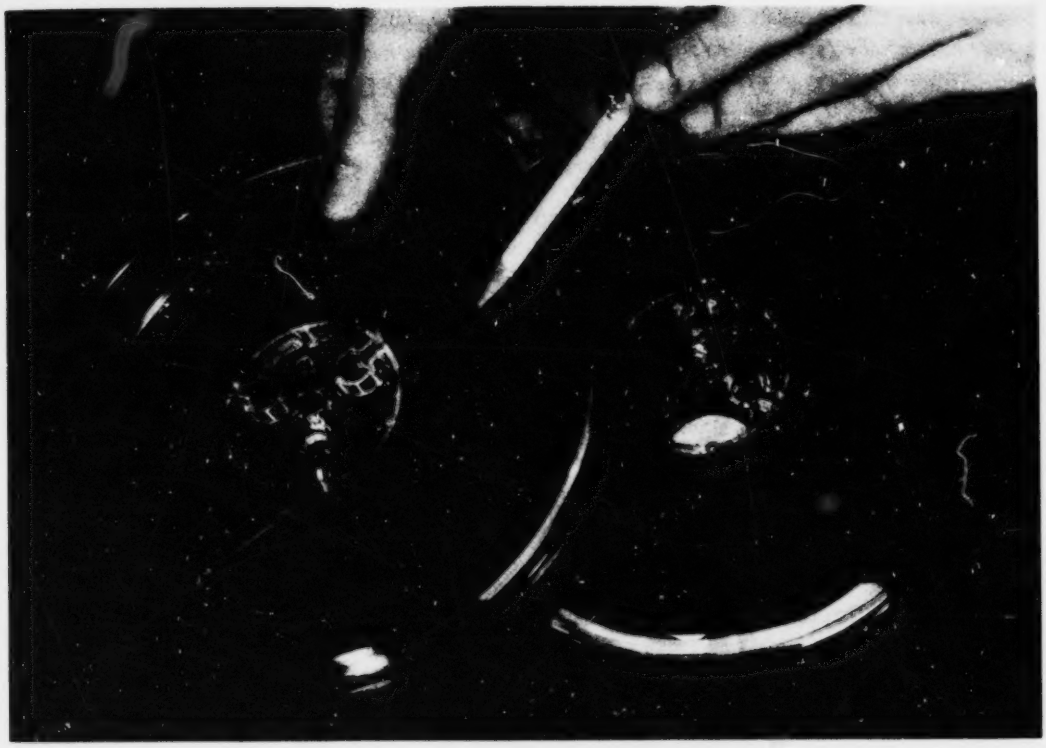
Before copying on to reel-to-reel tape, blank, non-magnetic leader tape (usually plastic, but paper has also been recommended) should be spliced to the beginning of the reel to prevent damage. When the end is reached, another four to six feet of leader should be added. Splicing should be done with professional splicing tape, never with masking or mending tape.

Tapes should be shelved vertically, not stacked on their sides unless they are housed in rigid plastic containers. The boxes should not be packed too tightly as they are difficult to remove and might be damaged in the process. Labelling should be done with a waterproof, colourfast ink such as is used for marking motion picture film. Metal shelves are acceptable, as there is no evidence they cause damage to magnetic tape.

Tapes should be kept away from heat sources such as radiators, fireplaces, and electrical equip-

Shelve tape vertically, not on their sides. This photo shows wooden shelves but metal shelves are equally acceptable.

Tapes should be placed inside plastic bags as an additional barrier against dust and moisture.



Uneven (left) versus smooth rewind. Rewinding at playback speed, rather than high speed, results in a smooth pack of the tape. The tape is less vulnerable to edge damage and dust.

ment. Large motors are the likeliest generators of magnetism so keep tapes away from these and any other source of magnetism. There should be good ventilation in the storage area which should be kept at a moderate temperature (17-23°C and constant). A positive air pressure (higher than outside the storage area) will reduce dust levels.

Because of their susceptibility to print-through, audio cassette recordings cannot be considered permanent. The technical committee of the International Association of Sound Archives, for instance, has concluded that for long-term storage, high quality reel-to-reel tape is far superior to any cassette tape and that cassette recordings should be copied onto low print, low noise reel-to-reel tape for permanent preservation. Reel-to-reel originals only need copying onto cassettes to create a security and working copy. Each project should decide on a standard for tape reel size, type of tape, tape speed, number of sides to be recorded, and how many tracks or channels to use.

For master recording of monaural oral history interviews the Provincial Archives of British Columbia uses Ampex 406 or Scotch 208 tapes in 7-in. or 5-in. reels at 3¾ ips on two tracks. A different standard is used for stereo interviews. Cassette working copies are produced on specially ordered 66 minute cassettes to provide sufficient leeway when copying from 60 minute originals.

Oral folk history can complement written historical literature in any situation in wh ch the human side of history is involved, i.e. when the stress is on the individual as a person, not as a statistic . . . .

—William L. Montell, Oral History Review *(1971)*

Handling and storage: Archival quality magnetic tape, if treated properly, will last a long time, possibly hundreds of years. Even more dramatic is the permanence of the magnetic signal itself; audio tape does not wear out magnetically. Tape wear, tape

HANDLING, STORAGE AND PRESERVATION CHECKLIST

Work and Storage Areas

—Fire safe building
—CO_2 or halon (preferred) extinguishers close at hand
—No smoking, eating or drinking
—Regular cleaning to keep dust to a minimum
—No strong magnetic fields close to tapes
—Anti-static floor material
—Positive internal air pressure to keep dust out
—Temp. 20°C ± −3° and constant
—Humidity 50% ± −5% and steady
—Dust removed from tapes and tape boxes prior to entry.

In Transit

—Fire resistant packaging
—Dust and moisture protected in plastic bag
—Tightly packaged to restrict movement

Storage Cabinets or Racks

—Clearance more than two feet to electric fixture
—Inspected before and after shipment
—Vertical stacking of tape but no tight packing
—No magnetic door latches

Tape Handling

—Minimal finger contact
—Clean tape transports every shift
—Constant tension at moderate level
—Rewound at regular intervals at recording speed
—Regular inspection to check for tape scatter

damage, or dropouts can almost always be attributed to improper handling. The three keys to preservation of oral history interviews are first, a high quality, low print-low noise tape for original recording, second, procedures to reduce the handling of the original, and third, regularly maintained equipment. Tapes played back on ill-serviced tape recorders may have the signal altered by magnetized head or tape guides. Once the magnetic signal has been damaged or lost it is impossible to recover, even with audio enhancement equipment. Anyone wishing to establish a permanent collection of oral history interviews should study the available literature on the subject and consult with other audio archives on ways to lessen risk and damage to their interviews.

A clean storage and handling area is essential. Rules forbidding smoking, eating or drinking while working with magnetic tape must be enforced. Keeping the tape recording equipment in proper working order and regular cleaning of the recording head, along with demagnetizing it, will ensure better quality copies, as well as keep the original in good condition.

Original recordings that have been played should only be stored after they have been wound onto a take-up reel at playback speed. While this is sometimes awkward and inconvenient, it will increase the life of the tape considerably. This type of storage, sometimes referred to as "tails out," will provide an even wind with no ridges or creases. Tapes should be inspected periodically for a condition called scattered wind (or stepping) which can occur after rewinding tape that has been partially played through. Sealed plastic bags, especially the Zip Lock type, are recommended for permanent storage as they provide a dust and moisture barrier.

Tapes that are being shipped should be packaged securely and sealed in plastic to keep them dry. The shipping package should be well marked with a sticker such as "MAGNETIC TAPE: DO NOT EXPOSE TO HEAT OR MAGNETIC SOURCES". If carrying tape through an airport metal detector, it would be best simply to ask for a hand inspection because the guard may not know the strength of the magnetic field if the security device is one which generates its own magnetism. X-rays, however, cannot damage magnetic tape so it is safe to have tapes passed through airport security devices of this type.

THE INTERVIEW FILE

The next step is the creation of the interview file. The information for this file has actually been collected throughout the interview. In the case of our example, the file would be called "138:1-4 Carson" and would be filed numerically by the interview base number, 138. This file would contain the signed tape release, four interview information forms (one for each of the four original tapes), verbatim transcripts of the interview if they exist and any other material relating to this interview, such as the question set, correspondence from the interviewee or photographs of the interviewee.

The interview information form (figure 15) will contain details on the recording's physical format and the summary of contents. One form should be used per tape. When using standard cassettes, it is not necessary to note the size or the speed of the tape recording since these do not vary.

Summary: The summary of the interview's contents is extremely important. A detailed but concise summary will function as a finding aid to the content of the recording, especially when transcription is not feasible. The summary is prepared on the basis of an auditing of the tape and should reflect the sequence of the subjects and the emphasis placed on them by the interviewee.

The summary should guide the researcher to the tape where the tone and content of the discussion can be heard first hand. It should be a key to the contents of the interview, not an interpretation of them. To take the Carson example, "Attitudes of mining company and Workmen's Compensation Board," is preferable to, "Mining company cheats father with help from the Workmen's Compensation Board."

In certain circumstances, the summary might contain a comment on the amount of detail contained in a discussion: "Detailed discussion on the forest fire of July 1922, Silverton"; or, "Brief description of move to Sandon, 1922"; or, "The 1930s Depression (little detail)". This sort of editorial evaluation should only be used when the subject description appears to be misleading, either minimizing or overemphasizing the actual content. In most cases the context of the summary will indicate the emphasis.

What the oral folk historian wishes to record is not the plain unvarnished fact but all the notions, biases, and reactions aroused by the supposed fact, for in them lie the historical perspectives of the folk.
—Richard Dorson, Oral History Review *(1971)*

While it is impossible to totally avoid subjectivity in the construction of the summary, the aim is to reflect the recording as faithfully as possible. You will be tempted to stress topics which are of current interest or bits of information which are known to be of importance in current research. This should be resisted unless it reflects the emphasis of the recording as well.

We recommend against the use of digital or footage tape counters as measurements of topics within the summary. These counters are not standardized and are therefore only useful if the recording is played back on the same machine. The only accurate method is to time the summary or use the

INTERVIEW INFORMATION FORM

Tape number: 138 • 2

Name: Carson, Lionel James
Birth: 1903
Address: 43 Slocan St., New Denver, B.C. V0G 1S0
Title/Project: The Slocan Valley : 1918-1945 (Part 2)
Interviewer: Robbins, Donald John
Date of recording: 1984 02 02 Place: New Denver, B.C.

Physical description of original recording:

- [x] reel
- [ ] cassette
- [x] 5 inch
- [ ] 7 inch
- [ ] other
- [x] 3¾ ips
- [ ] 7½ ips
- [ ] other
- [ ] monaural
- [x] stereo

Restrictions: none [x] or:

Summary

time (optional)	
0'0"	Family moved to Silverton, 1918.
0'30"	Influenza epidemic of 1918; effects on Silverton.
3'30"	Father a hard-rock miner; effects of silicosis. on father.
7'20"	Attitudes of mining company and Workmen's Compensation Board.
10'30"	Family moved to Summit Lake logging camp, 1920; camp life: housing, school.
15'10"	Logging operations. pole cutting, railroad, log chutes, bunkhouses and cookhouse.
20'05"	Forest fire of July 1922.
21'20"	Moved to Sandon, 1922.
23'45"	CPR boats on Slocan Lake; S.S. Slocan, S.S. Sandon and S.S. Roseberry described.
25'30"	Mines and mining near Sandon, 1920s.
26'30"	The 1930s Depression; Carson on relief.
27'10"	Bunkhouse and cookhouse anecdotes.
30'10"	[end tape 2; track 1]

Summary by: Donald John Robbins

(continue overleaf if necessary)

Figure 15: Interview Information Form.

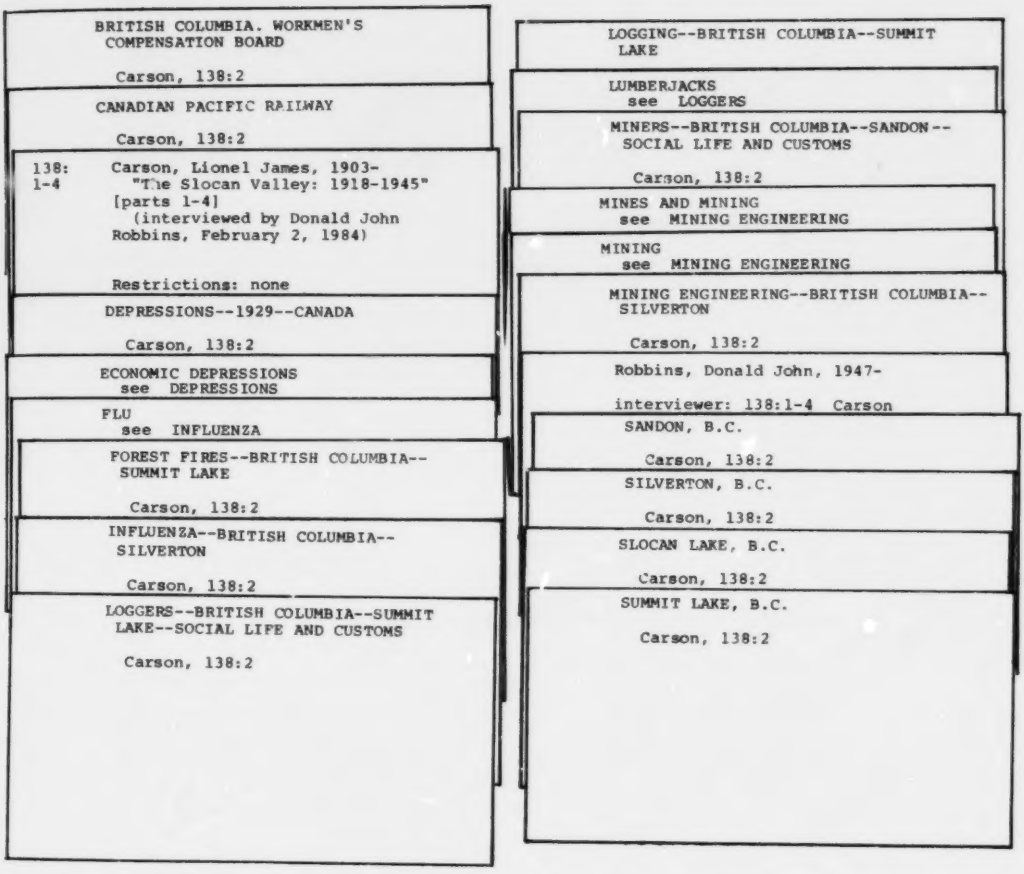
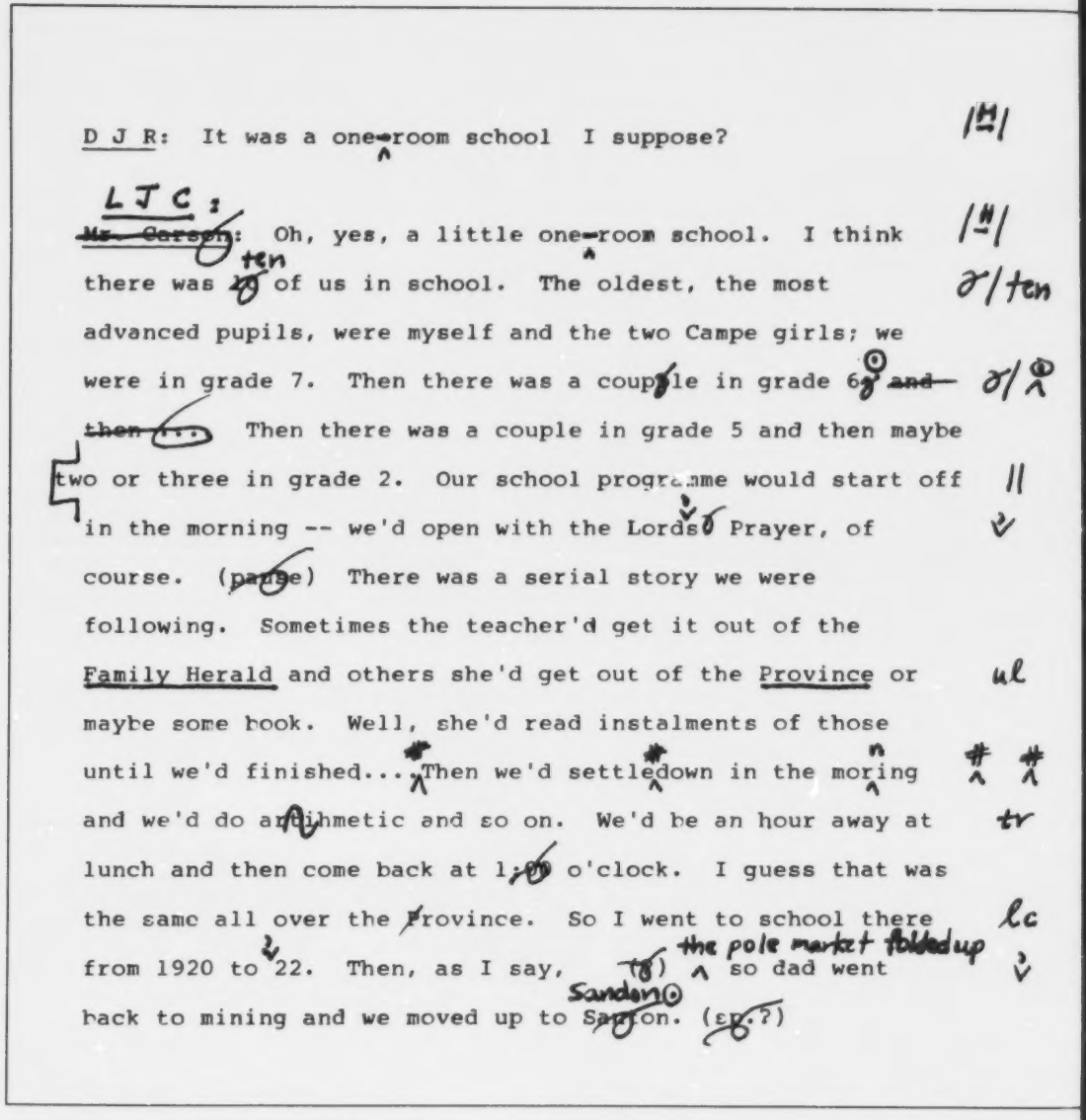


Figure 16: Name/Subject index cards.

TAPE system. The TAPE (Timed Access to Pertinent Excerpts) system is an efficient method for providing access to the contents of an oral history interview. Developed by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the TAPE system pinpoints subject matter by binding a spoken time code to the interview. This is accomplished by two or four track stereo copying with the time code on one track and the interview on another. The TAPE method eases the time-consuming task of locating information on an oral history recording. The system may be used with a précis of the contents of the tape or with transcripts. For more information about the TAPE system, refer to the bibliography.

NAME AND SUBJECT INDEXES

The final step in processing an oral history interview is the creation of a combined name and subject index. In most cases, the best method for doing this is on file cards. Through a name/subject index, a researcher will be able to locate interviews by a particular speaker, interviews by a particular interviewer or interviews which contain information on any subject. The index is essential for providing access to a collection of interviews. Tape recordings are not easily browsed nor is it efficient to scan all the summaries in a collection of any substantial size.


D J R: It was a one-room school I suppose?

L J C:
~~Ms. Carson~~: Oh, yes, a little one-room school. I think there was ~~10~~ ten of us in school. The oldest, the most advanced pupils, were myself and the two Campe girls; we were in grade 7. Then there was a couple in grade ~~6~~ 8 ~~and then~~ ... Then there was a couple in grade 5 and then maybe two or three in grade 2. Our school programme would start off in the morning -- we'd open with the Lords Prayer, of course. (~~pause~~) There was a serial story we were following. Sometimes the teacher'd get it out of the Family Herald and others she'd get out of the Province or maybe some book. Well, she'd read instalments of those until we'd finished... Then we'd settled down in the moring and we'd do arithmetic and so on. We'd be an hour away at lunch and then come back at 1:~~00~~ o'clock. I guess that was the same all over the ~~P~~province. So I went to school there from 1920 to 22. Then, as I say, ~~(?)~~ the pole market folded up so dad went back to mining and we moved up to ~~Sa~~Sandon. (~~sp.?~~)

Figure 17: Example of a proof read first draft.

You have two choices in the selection of subject headings. You may either adopt an existing list of subject headings or devise your own. Unless you have the substantial backing of professional archivists or librarians to create and maintain a list of subjects (called a subject thesaurus), you will be better off adopting an existing system. We recommend the Library of Congress *Subject Headings* (9th ed., 1980) supplemented by *Canadian Subject Headings* (1978) published by the National Library of Canada. You should also adopt the system of cross references from the LC thesaurus to guide researchers from subjects not used to ones that are.

Subject terms should be typed in CAPITAL letters, while the interviewee and interviwer name card will be in upper/lowercase. Only the interviewee's card will contain a complete description of the tape; we recommend the following information:

—identification numbers
—interviewee's full name
—descriptive title
—interviewer's full name
—date of recording
—restrictions

Researchers wishing to know the physical description of the original can consult the file for the particular interview.

Figure 16 shows the name and subject cards (including cross-references) that would be derived from the example we have been using. They would be filed alphabetically in the name/subject index. Note that the names of both interviewer and interviewee are interfiled along with the subjects.

TRANSCRIPTION

One of the thorniest questions surrounding oral history interviews is whether or not they should be transcribed as a matter of standard procedure. Transcription means the production of a verbatim typescript of the interview, exactly as it took place, not an edited historical text which might be amended, annotated, rearranged and interpreted. A transcript is potentially even more useful than a summary since it reproduces the words as they are spoken. Tape recordings cannot be skimmed for their content and it is the rare researcher who will give the time to listen to recordings in their entirety. A transcript can be of great help in quickly locating the information a researcher wants, especially if it is keyed to a timed summary.

The arguments against transcription are twofold. First, transcripts are only a poor reflection of the original recording and are devoid of a great deal of the meaning implicit in expression, accent and inflection. The transcript is like a musical notation, a kind of two-dimensional substitute for something much more complete and rich. Researchers can rarely be persuaded to listen to an interview if a transcript is available, since most of them have had no practice in analyzing the audio dimensions of an oral history interview. Second, and even more significant, is the expense of the process and the amount of time involved. Cost is frequently the decisive factor. One justification for not transcribing argues that if there is no transcript the researcher is forced to use the tape recording and confront the extra dimension of information which it provides. The opposing argument is that the absence of a transcript will cause researchers to avoid oral history altogether.

Transcription is often best left to users rather than producers of oral history interviews. The users will select the parts of the interview which are most useful for their purpose and can transcribe directly into the format they require.

The process of transcription has been described in detail in several publications. Some early oral history projects, whose users were academics who insisted on transcripts, destroyed the recording after the transcript was made. Everyone now places more emphasis on the recording, but some projects still consider a finely polished transcript to be the ultimate end product of an interview.

The selection of a transcriber is nearly as important as the choice of an interviewer. They should not merely be good typists, but people with wide general knowledge, familiarity with the topic, and a good ear for the speech of people with a variety of voices and speaking mannerisms. Editors should also have these qualities, plus a more sophisticated or specialized knowledge of the person or subject.

Each project should have a guide for transcribers and editors which defines format and style. It is important to establish a preferred style for indicating pauses, asides, interruptions, and the formats for beginning and ending the recording, for title pages and so on. The following one sentence example with seven differences shows the necessity of establishing style and format guidelines:

John Stanley: It was, uh . . . the C[anadian] P[acific] R[ailway] — Canada's first transcontinental, by the way — was completed in the eighteen seventies . . . no! eighties, with "Old Curly" providing some of the labor.

JS: The CPR (Canada's first transcontinental, by the way) was completed in the 1880s, with Old Curly providing some of the labour.

The examples are neither right nor wrong. They simply show decisions regarding style and format will need to be made with nearly every sentence.

This section is not meant to be a style guide but merely a suggestion of the things one should contain. The style guide for the *Hansard* of the British

TRANSCRIPTION FORMAT

1. Title page (figure 18).

2. At the top of the first page of each track the following information is given (figure 19):
   The interviewee's name.
   The date of the recording.
   The identification number.
   The track number.

3. For all subsequent pages (see figure 20) use a code typed in the top right corner, for example:

   138:2-1, p. 12

   The number 138 is the interview identification number; the 2 is the tape number; 1, the track number; and p. 12 is the page number.

4. The margin is 1½ inches on the left side. This is important for binding copies of the transcript. A margin of 1 inch should appear on all other sides.

5. The body of the transcript is double or triple spaced in rough transcripts and double spaced in the final version.

6. The names of the interviewer and interviewee are underlined or capitalized. Initials may be substituted.

7. If a track (or tape) ends in the middle of a sentence put:

   But you see I . . . (continued on Tape 2, Track 1)

   If the beginning of the sentence has been left out on the tape, the beginning should be added in square brackets:

   Mr. Carson: (continued from Tape 1, Track 1) [But you see I] was going there that spring.

8. On a line after the last word of the track the following words should appear:

   End of Track 1.
   (or)
   End of Track 2.

9. Leave adequate space and a question mark in pencil when in doubt about the spelling of a proper name or word. Interviewees or interviewers should be able to supply this information when they review the transcripts.

10. Square brackets are used to indicate clarification, editorial comments or corrections made to the transcript by the interviewee:

    The Indians sold it [wood] and we made it [lumber] and sold it to the steamer.

11. Parentheses (like this) are used for description of sounds on the tape such as laughter, a phone ringing, unintelligible comments or other audible background noises. Capitalization and punctuation should be kept to a minimum within parentheses.

    And that's the story of the train wreck. (tape stopped). I can tell you another incident about logging trains.

    I wasn't more than about two hours on the Mount Royal (noise in the background) when she was wrecked at the head of the canyon.

    We couldn't afford another horse so Father hitched us three kids to the plough (chuckles) and he held the plough.

12. Names and titles such as books, radio programs and ships are underlined (or italicized):
    Then he wrote The Dream.
13. Corrections can be made by adding words above the line:
    when
    I don't know/that happened.

Columbia legislature, for instance, is nearly 200 pages long. Rather than devise your own guide, you may wish to adopt an existing style, perhaps from one of the larger oral history programs.

Rules for things such as spelling and for dealing with numerals should be defined. Adopt a standard dictionary, such as the *Gage Canadian Dictionary*, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* or *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*.

If restricted tapes are transcribed, they must be securely stored. Tapes and transcripts with minor restrictions (permission to cite or quote; permission to broadcast), should be colour coded or stamped to indicate the existence of the restriction and its nature. This will also be indicated in the name/subject index.

Transcription equipment consists of a cassette recorder with a foot pedal which allows the transcriber to continue typing and to stop, start, rewind and/or fast forward the recorder without touching the hand controls. Tape recorders for transcription are discussed in Appendix B. A pair of headphones allows for better concentration on voice patterns and pronunciations.

Transcripts require three basic stages for completion: rough transcript, editing and final transcript. Both transcribers and editors should work from a cassette copy of the interview, never from the original since the constant winding and rewinding at high speed can damage tapes.

Rough Transcript: Using predetermined guidelines and formats, the transcriber makes a verbatim typescript of the interview. This rough transcript should be triple spaced, with wide margins to allow for corrections and amendments. An interviewer who has made a high quality sound recording, who has kept notes on the spelling of names and jargon and who has asked to have difficult terms defined on the tape, will be blessed by the transcriber. The few extra moments these points require during the interview not only make for a more accurate transcript but also save hours of costly typing and research in the transcription phase.

Editing and Auditing: The second step is to have an editor familiar with the transcript style, conventions and formats, review the transcript and make the necessary changes in pencil (see figure 17). This is often referred to as auditing, since it is done in concert with the recording. Meaningless crutch words and false starts can be eliminated and spelling made consistent. Awkward phrasing may be retained where the speaker's speech is dominated by such patterns; this is not meant to reflect poorly on the interviewee, but merely to suggest speech mannerisms; "English as she is spoke," you might say. No attempt should be made to duplicate dialect or accent, as that is the purpose of the recording, not the transcript. Spellings of names are confirmed, but information is not corrected. The transcript is meant to be an accurate record of what was said, not a record of verified "facts." If dates or words are corrected, these and other editorial insertions are indicated by square brackets, [like this].

The editor should use a set of standard proofreader's marks to indicate changes. These marks have been developed over the years to allow editors to make clear instructions about changes. Many dictionaries and encyclopedias contain a page of proofreader's marks.

Upon completion of the second stage, it may be appropriate to send a copy of the transcript to the interviewee for comments or clarification of information. This step, however, is optional. The interview file should reflect the fact that the interviewee has reviewed the transcript. Resist efforts to make wholesale changes in the transcript that do not re-

LIONEL JAMES CARSON

The Slocan Valley: 1919-1945 [Part 2]

Interviewed by

Donald John Robbins

February 2, 1984

SOUND AND MOVING IMAGE DIVISION

Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Victoria, B.C.

V8V 1X4

[Interview No. 138, Tape No. 2, Tracks 1 & 2]

Figure 18: Transcript title page.

D J R: We're going to talk mostly about the Slocan, so maybe we could start with the story of those years just before you came to the Slocan Valley.

L J C: Before I came to the Slocan?

D J R: Yes.

L J C: Well, we made the move from Kimberley to the Slocan, from the East Kootenay right through to Rossland. We lived in Rossland for three years -- from 1915 to 1918. It was during the boom when copper prices were so good during the First World War. But in 1918 copper prices fell and conditions in Rossland got pretty poor as employment was concerned, so my dad moved over to Silverton. But I was in Rossland when the flu started. School began in September and I remember going to school for a week when the flu epidemic got so bad they closed the schools. So we were idle, the children out of school for the month of September and right into October. Then we moved into Silverton and, why, the flu was still so bad that the schools.... I guess all the British Columbia schools were closed at that time. I never started until January 1919. So there was three months we didn't get any schooling.

As I say, Dr. Feyer, he was a really fine man and very conscientious in looking after all his patients. Well,

Figure 19: Sample transcript format.

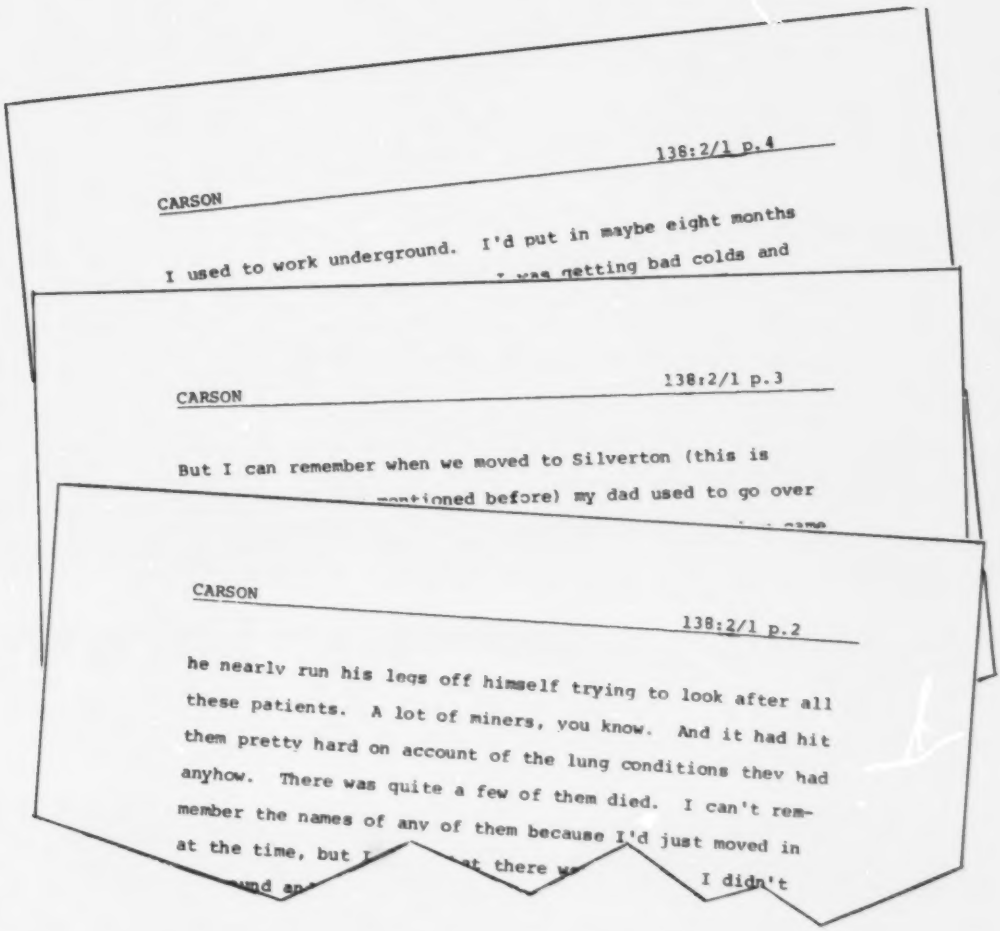

CARSON
138:2/1 p.4
I used to work underground. I'd put in maybe eight months
CARSON
138:2/1 p.3
But I can remember when we moved to Silverton (this is
CARSON
138:2/1 p.2
he nearly run his legs off himself trying to look after all
these patients. A lot of miners, you know. And it had hit
them pretty hard on account of the lung conditions they had
anyhow. There was quite a few of them died. I can't rem-
member the names of any of them because I'd just moved in
I didn't

Figure 20: Transcript formats.

flect what was said in the interview. Any changes that are accepted should be indicated by square brackets. If the interviewee insists on significant changes, additions or reconsiderations, an addendum may be added to the file.

Final Transcript: The third stage is to have the edited transcript retyped. Double space and be sure to allow wide margins, especially on the left-hand side, for future binding of copies. Do not punch or bind an original transcript, but rather file it for permanent storage in an acid-neutral folder such as is available from an archival supply company. Because the original is filed loose, it is important that the identifying numbers be on the upper edge of each page.

Since the final transcript is a permanent document, special long life bond paper should be used. This will add decades to its life and the additional expense is miniscule compared to what has already been invested in the interview. Recommended papers include "Krypton Parchment," "Perma Dur" bond (available from W.J. Stewart) or "Permalife" (also known as "Prestige Bond"; available through Hollinger corporation or Carr-McLean). Local sta-

tioners may also carry these products. For extra long life in a photocopy paper, Xerox 1024 paper is recommended. Projects using and saving floppy disks from word-processing programs should consider the floppy disk as permanent and print paper copies as required. Provided the disks are well maintained and backups are kept, there is no need to print on archival quality paper.

Estimates of the total time required to transcribe and index a one hour interview range up to 40 hours. This is probably high and 10 to 20 hours may be a better estimate. This produces one original transcript of 40–50 pages, double spaced, and includes final editing and an index. The rough transcript can take anywhere from three to eight hours per recorded hour.

The cost of transcribing can be lowered considerably by the use of word-processing equipment which eliminates redundant retyping and results in a faster turnaround in the entire process. One third or more of the total time required could be cut through use of an appropriate word-processing program on a microcomputer. Although it may seem expensive initially, the floppy disk storage medium should not be recycled. Instead, one, or perhaps even two, copies should be permanently retained. Future developments, such as inexpensive text transmission over long-distance communication lines, make it important to retain the floppy disks. Useful features to look for in word-processing programs include a "glossary," the ability to instantly insert words or phrases that recur in the interview without retyping (e.g., the interviewer and interviewee's names), and an indexing function.

If you need a transcript in a hurry, secretarial or word processing services in the Yellow Pages of the phone book may provide assistance. A large archives may also be able to provide a list of people interested in historical research work including transcription.

* * *

The ways in which you or other researchers may use oral history are many. In the next chapter we will deal with some of the specific uses of oral history interviews. The key points of this chapter are to assure the permanent preservation of the interview and to simplify the researcher's task as much as possible by making the material accessible for all types of study and use. The artifact of the interview, the tape recording, has been transformed into a useful historical document.

FROM DOCUMENT TO HISTORY: THE USES OF ORAL HISTORY

The uses of oral history interviews are many. Like other historical documents, they are commonly used by a wide range of people, not just historians. Interviews have been used for scholarly research, for the writing of popular history, in radio broadcasts, in television and in films, in genealogical research, in slide/tape presentations and museum displays, in education, as a source material for drama, poetry and fiction, and as therapy for the aged. Oral history is a widely recognized technique in fields such as ethnology, linguistics, sociology and folklore.

This chapter is not a definitive discussion of the use of oral history but simply an outline of some of these uses with both their potentials and their problems. It will also point out some examples and suggest some standards for citing and quoting from oral history interviews.

Research and Writing: The common use of any document in historical works is as supporting or verifying evidence for the historian's thesis. A large part of any historical work is the writer's reconstruction of a time, place, person or event, or interpretation of the reasons why things happened as they did. Brief quotes from various documents are used to enrich the narrative or support a particular point and sound documents may be successfully used in this way. The writer who uses the recording can also describe the circumstances and the additional meaning which is contained in the voice (although this will be a personal interpretation of its significance).

Writers are sometimes perplexed about how to introduce such material and how to cite it. A common approach is to briefly explain the circumstances of its creation. "In an interview at the author's home on February 2, 1968, so and so said that . . .". The introduction might also include other information: "In an interview with So-and-so shortly after this event, he commented . . .". Further information may be given in the form of notes.

While historians study the actors of history from a distance, their characterizations of their lives, views, and actions will always risk being misdescriptions, projections of the historians' own experience and imagination, a scholarly form of fiction. Oral evidence, by transforming the "objects" of study into subjects, makes for a history which is not just richer, more vivid and heart-rending, but truer.

—*Paul Thompson,* The Voice of the Past *(90).*

For this reason it is important that interviewers define and describe their recording objectives in order to help the researcher evaluate the interview.

Some smoothing and rearrangement of transcripts by subject is often necessary, but the author must remain faithful to the intentions of the interviewee. An author's commentary or analysis is often added to oral accounts allowing the reader to

benefit from both the author's assessment as well as speaker's words. Oral history interviews offer an excellent opportunity to combine the appeal and informality of speech with the rigour of scholarship. Michael Taft's *Tall Tales of British Columbia*, for instance, has not only the popular appeal of the verbal prankster who entices the unwary listener into the trap of the tall tale, but also an unobtrusive academic analysis of British Columbia's tales. The book may be enjoyed by the reader simply seeking entertainment or by the professional folklorist.

The following description of three levels of editing illustrates how these might be used to produce three different but equally valuable types of publication.

The first and most obvious way is simply to provide a printed version of a tape is to publish a verbatim transcript (as described in the transcription section of this book). There are, however, some problems with this approach. The transcript may be too long to publish in its entirety; it may be too discursive or it might discuss one subject in several different places with unrelated material in between; or it may be so chopped up by questions or false starts and tangential material that reading is tedious and difficult. These problems can be remedied without injury to the reminiscences by some basic editing procedures. The simplest of these would be to remove the irrelevant questions, answers, tangents and chatter. However, readers should be alerted to the fact that the transcript has been changed, even if only in a minor way.

A second level of editing involves removal of irrelevant questions and answers, plus some rearrangement of the material to fit a chronological or thematic pattern, consolidating the occurrences of the same subject or comment. Where the interviewee jumps back or forth in time, the description of events would be rearranged or placed in chronological order. This approach still includes the questions and tries to preserve context, but there is an additional degree of interpretation.

A third level of editing involves the consolidation of material on a thematic or chronological basis, removal of questions, and the weaving together of comments into a narrative form which preserves the interviewee's words but without the interruption of questions. In the case of an interviewee whose verbal record transcribes poorly, this may even involve some alteration of sentence structure or combination of partial sentences and phrases. These accounts should still be faithful to the intent of the original, though more readable in form.

The second and third levels of editing open the possibility for blending several versions of the same subject. Accounts may be re-ordered and a set of comments woven together with others on the same subject. For example, contradictory accounts may be juxtaposed in such a way as to shed light on an event from differing viewpoints or to heighten the drama of an event while still preserving the original words of each speaker. Editing involves hundreds of decisions about order and meaning that no two writers would entirely agree upon. The end result can still be a coherent and exciting presentation of a historical event.

Biography and Autobiography: Oral history is particularly well-suited to the writing of biography and autobiography. The inclusion of the voices of the subject, as well as those of intimate acquaintances, has been a boon to the art. Vancouver writer Rolf Knight has produced three fine examples: *A Man of Our Times* (1976), with Maya Koizumi, *Stump Ranch Chronicles* (1977) and the outstanding, *A Very Ordinary Life* (1974). Knight's common theme is the story of ordinary men and women who, perhaps unrealized at the time, had experiences in common with other working people. In contrast, a good example of biography of a well-known public figure that has been enormously enhanced by oral history is David J. Mitchell's 1983 biography of British Columbia's longest-serving premier, *W. A. C.: Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*.

Ethnic Studies: Writing about ethnic minorities has been boosted through the use of oral history. The experience of etchnicity is not easily documented through other sources. The publications of the Ontario Multicultural History Society provided fine examples as well as Daphne Marlatt's *Steveston Recollected* (1974) about the Japanese-Canadian fishermen of that town. The Doukhobors and Scandinavians are treated in two *Sound Heritage Series* volumes *Toil and Peaceful Life* (1977) and *Dreams of Freedom* (1982).

Industrial and Labour History: There are many fine examples of the use of oral history in the writing of industrial and labour history. Lynne Bowen's *Boss Whistle* (1982) and Ken Drushka's

Against Wind and Weather (1981) chronicle the Vancouver Island coal industry and Pacific coast towboating respectively. *A History of Shipbuilding in British Columbia* (1977) and *Man Along the Shore* (1975) are two fine examples of publications compiled by the workers themselves. Elliott Leyton's *Dying Hard* is a moving example of this genre of writing as it describes the occupational health hazards of fluorspar mining in Newfoundland.

Local Area History: One of the strongest forces behind oral history is the desire of local area residents to produce a history of their locale. Oral history interviews have often been employed as a method for gathering this type of information. There are many examples of this type of oral history writing but perhaps the most outstanding is Daphne Marlatt and Carole Itter's *Opening Doors (Sound Heritage Series,* 1979), the story of Vancouver's east end and the community which developed there.

Creative Writing: Oral history, has been used as a source of material for creative forms such as poetry, fiction and drama. Recorded reminiscences suggest plots, characters, settings, manners of expression, accents and personalities which can assist the writer who wants to convey a particular setting, social milieu or time period. Similarly, actually listening to voices of people gives a "feel" for types of people which, in turn, can be recreated in prose or in dramatic performances. An outstanding example is Campbell Smith's play, *Juve* (1979) which is based on a series of tape recordings with Vancouver teenagers which are now part of the collection of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Actors have utilized oral history to create more believable representations of character roles.

Genealogy: One popular type of oral history is family history, interviewing family members to record stories, events, personalities, customs, expressions and so on. This information not only provides clues to the development of a family and its attitudes but also adds colour and feeling to its history and helps to establish a sense of identity. Interest in this field has resulted in a number of specialized research guides (see Appendix A for one example). A stunning and ultimately very controversial example of a book based on genealogical research using oral history is Alex Haley's *Roots*.

Geriatric Therapy: Those working with elderly people, particularly in institutions, have found that many of the people they work with benefit by a process known as life review, a personal re-appraisal of their actions and experiences. Oral history interviews have sometimes been used as a formal structure for this process. In these cases, the therapeutic considerations must outweigh those which are historical or archival. Nevertheless, fine historical documents are sometimes produced by this process.

Education: The use of oral history in the classroom can be effective on at least two levels. Living voices can bring the past to life for students of almost any age in a way that other tools can not. Otherwise uninterested students may be given a better appreciation of books and other historical documents through exposure to oral history. Two high school projects in the United States have resulted in publication series, the well-known *Foxfire* books and the less-celebrated but equally fine *Salt* books from Maine.

[I]f the archivist refuses to take up the tape recorder, not only will the historical record be less complete but it might also be of inferior calibre as this function might then be left to less qualified people.

—Richard Lochead, COHA Journal, *vol. 1*

Some teachers have also had students undertake oral history interviews with fine results. Students gain on both an academic and a personal level by learning the intellectual operations involved in the study of history (research, hypothesizing, testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions). Personal links to members of their families or communities, as well as learning how to articulate information, ask questions and conduct interviews, are other benefits. The rewards for both the student and the interviewee can be enormous. The most ambitious Canadian example of oral history in the classroom was the Saskatchewan Children and Grandparents Oral History Project which took place in 1980 as part of the province's 75th anniversary celebrations. More than 5,600 grade seven students participated

in the programme which saw the completed interviews deposited with the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

Programs in sound: Oral history materials have been effectively used in audio-visual productions such as classroom material, museum displays and in television and film productions. The most notable productions, however, have been radio programs.

There are several radio program formats in which oral history recordings are used, though perhaps the most demanding is the documentary sound program. A leading practitioner of historical radio documentaries is Imbert Orchard, a former CBC broadcaster. He collected not only the oral recollections, but also related sounds such as a sternwheeler's paddles if the topic was river travel. By selecting extracts from the tapes (often combining several voices) and adding related sounds, (his own narration and other sound effects). Refining process took place in which the parts were rearranged to achieve the desired continuity, contrast and flow. "A documentary is not reportage," said Orchard, "It is a piece that conveys its quality and meaning partly by the careful selection of material and partly by the imaginative and creative way in which this material is handled. Some documentaries, hopefully, will no more grow old than an especially fine recording of a piece of music." The creation of these programs is one of the highest challenges of oral history.

Appendix A
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

These are some of the most useful books, articles, periodicals and associations for people interested in oral history and the preservation and use of historical sound recordings.

A. GENERAL SOURCES

Baum, Willa K. *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1971. 63 pp.
—A good basic guide to oral history methods including interviewing.

Ives, Edward D. *The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Field Workers in Folklore and Oral History*. Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1980. 130 pp.
—A good basic guide for the novice. Recommended.

Oral History Association. *Oral History Evaluation Guidelines*. 1980. 14 pp.
—A set of guidelines to provide common standards for oral history in the United States. The guidelines have been officially adopted by the Oral History Association.

Public Archives of Canada. *Recording Techniques for Oral History Interviews*. Ca. 1974. Audio cassette available from Public Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, K1A 0N3.
—A practical guide to oral history techniques. Send your blank tape for a free copy.

Starr, Louis. "Oral History," *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*. Vol. 10, 1977, pp. 440-63.
—General discussion including the history of oral history by a pioneer of modern American oral history.

Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford University Press, 1978, 257 pp.
—Probably the most widely recommended publication on the history and methods of oral history. Includes useful model question sets. Highly recommended.

Vansina, Jan. *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. Translated by H.M. Wright. London, Eng.: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, 226 pp.
—The classic in the field.

B. SOUND RECORDING TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT

Burstein, Herman. *Questions and Answers About Tape Recording*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: TAB Books, 1974. 264 pp. Index.
—Questions and answers to topics arranged by chapters. Microphones are covered in one chapter. Good non-technical information.

Fantel, Hans. *Durable Pleasures: A Practical Guide to Better Tape Recording*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976. 207 pp. Index.
—Includes a brief discussion of oral history. Good non-technical guide to all aspects of recording with audio tape.

Nisbett, Alec. *The Technique of the Sound Studio for Radio, Recording Studio, Television and Film*. London: Focal Press, 1979. 560 pp. Index.
—One of the finest references on sound recording. The chapter on microphones is well presented and includes interviewing techniques.

Westcott, Charles G. and Dubbe, Richard F. *Tape Recorders: How They Work*. Indianopolis: Howard W. Sams & Co., 1974. 240 pp. Index.
—Good general introduction to tape recorders. Says little about microphones and turns technical from time to time. Well illustrated, though somewhat dated.

Prospective purchasers of audio equipment could consult the following periodical publications: *Canadian Consumer; Consumer Reports; Consumer Guide Magazine; Stereo and Tape Equipment Reports; High Fidelity;* and, for the more technically minded, *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society.*

C. INTERVIEWING

Brady, John. *The Craft of Interviewing*. New York: Vintage Books, 1977. 244 pp.
—Geared especially for journalists but with many useful tips and ideas.

Gordon, Raymond L. *Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques and Tactics*. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1975.
—Covers more than tape-recorded interviews; advice on what makes a good interview.

D. SPECIAL INTERESTS

Epstein, Ellen Robinson and Rona Mendelsohn. *Record and Remember: Tracing Your Roots Through Oral History*, Monarch, 1978, 119 pp.
—The best of several guides specifically designed for genealogical research. Has suggested interview outlines.

Harney, Robert F. *Oral Testimony and Ethnic Studies*. Multi-cultural History Society of Ontario, 14 pp.
—Includes a good set of questions for immigrant and ethnic interviews.

Orchard, Imbert. "Tape Recordings into Radio Documentaries." *Sound Heritage*, Vol. III, No. 1 1974, pp. 28-39.
—A fine discussion of the production of documentary sound programs based on oral history interviews, written by a long-time CBC producer.

E. TRANSCRIPTION AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

Baum, Willa K. *Transcribing and Editing Oral History*. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1977. 127 pp.
—The best of several guides to the process of transcribing and editing interviews. Includes record and bibliography. Note, however, that there are other approaches to transcription.

Treleven, Dale E. "Oral History, Audio Technology, and the TAPE System." *Internation Journal of Oral History*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1977, pp. 26-45.
—This article describes a well-thought-out alternative to transcription. The Timed Access to Pertinent Excerpts (TAPE) system produces a time-coded abstract or transcript.

F. TAPE STORAGE AND PRESERVATION

"Care and Handling of Magnetic Recording Tape." Redwood City, Calif.: Ampex Corporation, 1980. 12 pp.
—Basic information on the storage of magnetic tape. Free from Ampex, 401 Broadway, Redwood City, Ca., U.S.A. 94063.

Phonographic Bulletin, No. 18. International Association of Sound Archives, No. 15 (July 1976) and No. 18 (July 1977)
—Three good articles on long-term archival storage of magnetic tape.

McWilliams, Jerry. *The Preservation and Restoration of Sound Recordings*. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1979. 138 pp.
—A very good guide on this subject for the general reader. Includes bibliography, index and directory of suppliers. Recommended. G.

G. PERIODICALS

Canadian Oral History Association. *Journal*, 1975—.

International Association of Sound Archives. *Phonographic Bulletin*, ca. 1971—.

International Journal of Oral History, 1980—.
—Articles and reviews from around the world. Includes a very good section on equipment reviews.

Oral History Association. *The Oral History Review*, 1967—.
—The annual publication of this U.S. association. Practical and theoretical articles and reviews.

H. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Fox, John. "Bibliography Up-date," *Oral History Review*, 1977, pp. 48-57.
—Updates the Waserman bibliography to 1977.

Waserman, Manfred. *Bibliography on Oral History*. Oral History Association, North Texas State University, 1975.
—The basic bibliography of oral history.

I. ASSOCIATIONS

Canadian Oral History Association
P.O. Box 301, Station "A"
Ottawa, Ont. K1N 8V3

Oral History Association (U.S.A.)
North Texas State University
P.O. Box 13734
NTSU Station
Denton, Texas
U.S.A. 76203

Pacific Northwest Oral History Association
c/o Elizabeth Jacox
Idaho State Historical Society
610 N. Julia Davis Dr.
Boise, Idaho
U.S.A. 83702

Appendix B
AUDIO EQUIPMENT FOR ORAL HISTORY

The following equipment is recommended for oral history. It is not an all-inclusive list. Other models and other manufacturers may also be well-suited and reasonably priced. The quoted prices are suggested retail prices as of early 1984. Purchasers should ask for and expect to receive price discounts of perhaps 10%. (As one salesman put it, "That's the price, but you can grind me down.")

1. REEL-TO-REEL TAPE RECORDERS

The selection of professional quality reel-to-reel portable tape recorders is very limited. The Uher 4000 Report Monitor series has long been a reliable standard for portable reel-to-reel recorders.

—basic prices: Model 4000 (monaural) $1195
Model 4200 (stereo) $1395

—expect to pay extra for these options:
AC power supply adapter ($111)
Strap and leather case ($138)
Rechargeable battery pack ($138)

2. CASSETTE TAPE RECORDERS

A. Marantz PMD 220 (monaural) $ 300

Features include manual and automatic record level control (ALC), 3-head monitor, AC power cord and carrying strap, variable speed control.

B. Marantz PMD 360 (stereo) $ 480

Features include 2-track stereo recording, manual and ALC recording, AC power cord and carrying strap, Dolby noise reduction, two VU meters for monitoring record levels, 3-head monitor.

C. Sony TCM-5000 (monaural) $ 550

Includes case and strap, 3 heads, manual or ALC recording, VU meter.

D. Sony TC-D5M (stereo) $ 900

Exceptionally compact; features include large VU meters, 3 heads, record-level limiter option, Dolby noise reduction.

E. Uher CR 240 (stereo) $ 900 and up

Includes many "deluxe" features. Price quoted includes AC power adapter and case. This is a very high quality cassette recorder.

3. TRANSCRIPTION RECORDERS

Some field recorders are equipped with a foot-pedal control option which, combined with headphones makes a field recorder into a transcription unit. The Uher 5000 (about $1300 with foot pedal) is a reel-to-reel recorder especially designed for dictation and playback. Check with a dictation equipment dealer about cassette machines for this purpose. Companies making standard cassette dictation equipment include Sony, Lanier and Dictaphone.

4. MICROPHONES

Note: quoted prices usually do not include connector cables so expect to pay an extra $10 – $20.

A. Dynamic Cardiod

i. Sony FV30T	$ 35
ii. AKG D40	$ 49
iii. Sony FV50T	$ 55
iv. AKG D80	$ 80
v. Shure 517SA	$ 80
vi. Electrovoice 658	$105
vii. AKG D310	$140

B. Electret Cardiod

i. Sony ECM 260F	$100

C. Electret Omnidirectional (lapel type)

i. Sony ECM-16T	$ 50
ii. Sony ECM-150T	$100
iii. AKG D109	$120

5. RECORDING TAPE

For recording speech the so-called "metal" or "high bias" tapes are not required. Furthermore, the long-term storage life is less well-known than that for "normal bias" tapes.

A. Reel-to-reel

i. Ampex 406 (600') lots of 12	($5.50 ea.)
ii. Scotch 208 (600') lots of 12	($5.50 ea.)

B. Cassettes

C-60 cassettes (60 minutes total recording time) are recommended over C-90 and C-120. Avoid "white box", no brand name supermarket specials. You may get a bargain; you may get junk. Ask for box lots of 10, 12 or 20 and comparison shop. A good quality cassette tape will have a leader and be in a case held together by screws, not glued shut.

Many manufacturers make medium priced 60 minute cassettes including Sony, TDK, Maxell, Ampex and BASF. Expect to pay between $2.00 and $4.00 per tape in lots of 10 or more.

For a good tape at a very reasonable price, try the Adtec Music Master at about $1.40 each, including label and box, in lots up to 100. Contact:

Western Imperial Distributors
9 - 12840 Bathgate Way
Richmond, B.C.
V6V 1Z4 (ph. 270-8682)

6. ACCESSORIES

A. Carrying Case

Tape recorder carrying cases supplied by the manufacturers are expensive but they do protect the equipment. As an alternative, consider purchasing a less expensive camera case large enough to hold and protect the recorder as well as one or two microphones, power adapters, cord, batteries, and tapes.

B. Battery Charger

Consider the Dynacharger for AA, B, C, and D rechargeable batteries. About $30.

C. Mike Stand (table top)

Expect to pay $10 and up. Three inexpensive models are K + M 231-1 ($10), Atlas DS-5 (5 in. pipe; $12) and Atlas DS-7 (adjustable pipe; $18).

D. Mike Stand (floor stand and boom)

Expect to pay $75 and up. Makers include K + M and Atlas.

Appendix C
BASIC PROCEDURES FOR A SMALL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

1. Define Goals

A. Subject Matter

1. Geographic area (municipality, town, or region)
2. Institution of business (history of an organization such as a company, university, school or association)
3. Ethnic group, occupation, etc. 4. Genealogy or family history

B. End Product

1. Book or other publication
2. Sound program/broadcasting
3. Genealogy research
4. General archival collecting and historical preservation

C. The relationship of this project to other projects and/or pre-existing oral history collections.

2. Acquire Equipment

Decide on the type of equipment appropriate, necessary and within budget (see Chapter 2 and Appendix B).

3. Background Research

A. Published sources
B. Archival sources
C. Other oral history

4. Develop List of Potential Interviewees

A. names from research and contacts
B. set interview priorities (age, significance,memory, voice and style, representiveness)

5. Set Common Procedures for Interviewers

A. how to contact interviewees and prepare question sets
B. standard tape recorder and tape format (e.g. 3¾ ips reel-to-reel or C-60 cassettes)

C. guidelines for labelling tapes
—print names and dates clearly
—numbering of tapes in one interview
—identification of "original"
D. one person per tape
E. remove safety tabs if using cassettes
F. forms
—release form required
—complete archives information form including summary

6. Interview Identification

Adopt numbering system to clea.ıy identify and distinguish interviews

7. Tape Preservation

A. preservation of original recordings by copying for use
B. define handling procedures to minimize risks, especially to originals
C. storage in a secure, fire proof environment with moderate and steady temperature and humidity.

8. Documentation for Use

Provide name and subject index for the collection.

9. Basic Principles

A. cooperative venture between interviewee and interviewer
B. original recordings treated as permanent documents. Not edited or used for transcription or reference
C. collection organized so that other may use it for a variety of purposes including research, genealogy, education and broadcasting
D. all recording made with highest possible sound quality.

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